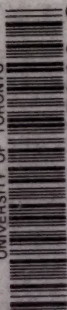
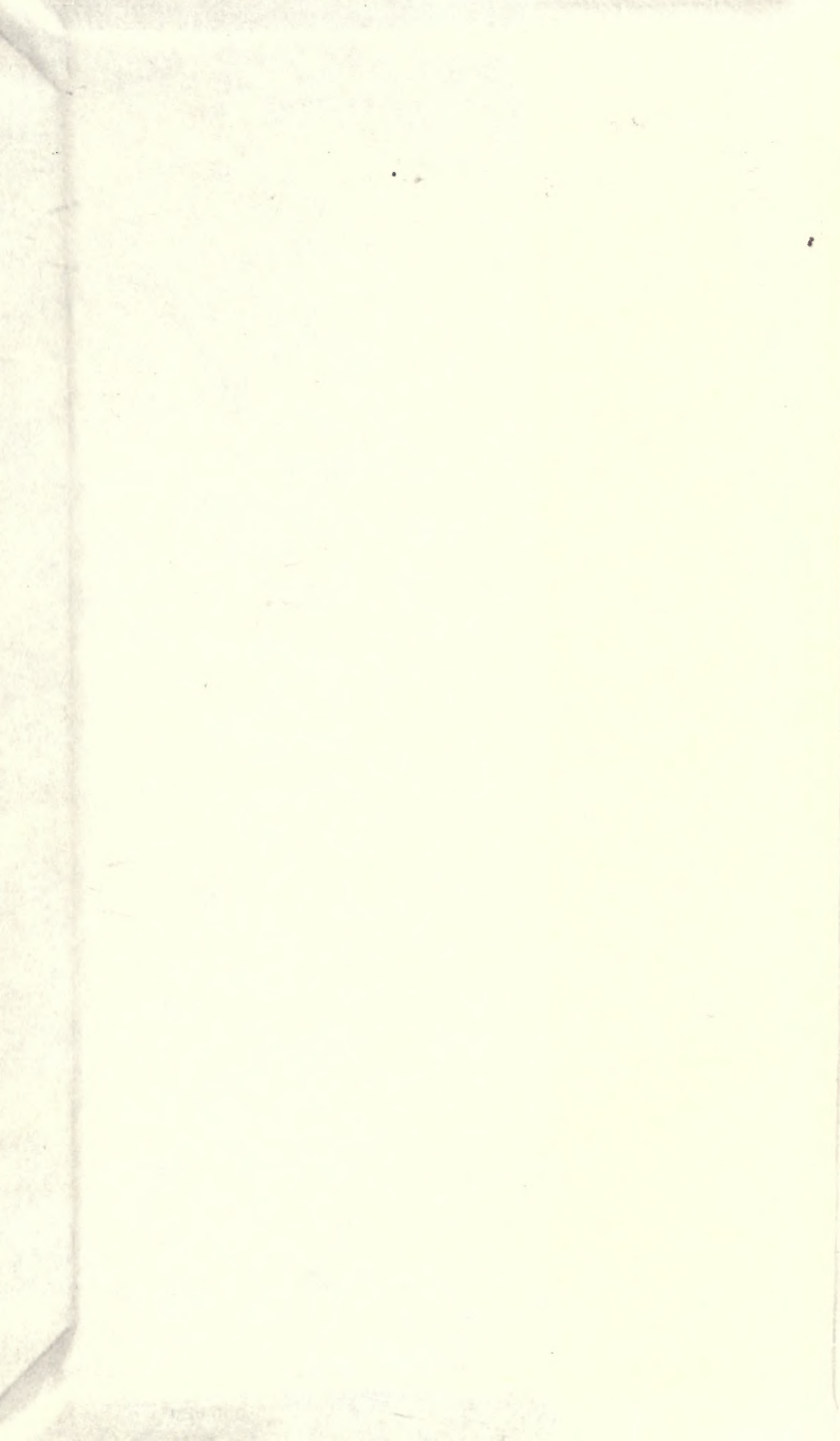


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BEHIND THE SCENES  
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# BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TERROR

BY

HECTOR FLEISCHMANN

AUTHOR OF "ROBESPIERRE AND THE WOMEN HE LOVED"  
"THE EMPEROR'S SPY"  
ETC. ETC.

*WITH FOURTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS*



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# CONTENTS

	PAGE
PRISONS AND PRISONERS—	
I. The Records . . . . .	13
II. Madame Roland in Sainte-Pélagie . . . . .	16
III. Life in Sainte-Pélagie . . . . .	27
IV. Life in the Conciergerie . . . . .	31
V. The Princess de Lamballe . . . . .	56
VI. <u>Marie-Antoinette's Last Hours</u> . . . . .	62
VII. <u>The Last Night of Fouquier-Tinville</u> . . . . .	70
VIII. Life in the Luxembourg . . . . .	83
IX. The End of the Dantonists . . . . .	85
X. The Comédie-Française in the Madelonnettes . . . . .	96
XI. The Prisoners of the Madelonnettes . . . . .	105
XII. Prison Régime at Port-Libre . . . . .	107
SOME NOTES ON MAXIMILIEN DE ROBESPIERRE—	
I. A Provincial Advocate . . . . .	113
II. A Séance at Arras . . . . .	122
III. Robespierre's Fall described by a Prisoner in the Luxembourg . . . . .	125
IV. The Last of Robespierre . . . . .	129
THE MARSEILLAISE . . . . .	131
THE LEGEND OF THE GLASS OF BLOOD . . . . .	135
"NOTRE-DAME-DE-SAINTE-GUILLOTINE"—	
I. Alexandre de Beauharnais . . . . .	143
II. Chabot: The Capuchin and Sansculotte . . . . .	150
III. The Last Charnel-house . . . . .	158
MME. TALLIEN . . . . .	172
JACQUES-LOUIS DAVID: PAINTER AND REGICIDE . . . . .	197
THE TRAGEDY OF THE PEOPLE'S FRIEND—	
I. A Strange Doctor . . . . .	208
II. Marat in Paris . . . . .	214
III. The People's Friend Persecuted . . . . .	219
IV. Charlotte Corday in Normandy . . . . .	230
V. The Murder . . . . .	240
VI. The Penalty . . . . .	249



## BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TERROR

	PAGE
<b>THE TRAGEDY OF THE PEOPLE'S FRIEND</b> ( <i>continued</i> )—	
VII. A Contemporary Portrait . . . . .	257
VIII. Marat, Painted by Himself . . . . .	269
IX. Simonne Evrard, Widow Marat . . . . .	274
<b>FORGOTTEN FIGURES—</b>	
I. The Man who Guillotined Statues . . . . .	293
II. A Singular Victim . . . . .	296
III. The Furnace-Merchant . . . . .	298
IV. Marie-Joseph Chénier . . . . .	305
V. An Artist in Wax . . . . .	310
<b>APPENDICES—</b>	
I. The Revolution against the Queen . . . . .	313
II. The Blood of the People's Friend . . . . .	328
III. The Accusation against Charlotte Corday . . . . .	332
<b>INDEX</b> . . . . .	337

## THE REVOLUTIONARY CALENDAR

In order to avoid fatiguing repetitions of the comparative dates of the Georgian Calendar and the Revolutionary Calendar, it has been thought advisable to place them before the reader on this page.

Vendémiaire begins	22nd September and ends	21st October.
Brumaire	„ 22nd October	„ 20th November.
Frimaire	„ 21st November	„ 20th December.
Nivôse	„ 21st December	„ 19th January.
Pluviôse	„ 20th January	„ 18th February.
Ventôse	„ 19th February	„ 20th March.
Germinal	„ 21st March	„ 19th April.
Floréal	„ 20th April	„ 19th May.
Prairial	„ 20th May	„ 18th June.
Messidor	„ 19th June	„ 18th July.
Thermidor	„ 19th July	„ 17th August.
Fructidor	„ 18th August	„ 16th September.

The last five days of September not included in this year are called “les jours sansculottides.”

Year I begins 22nd September, 1792, and ends 21st September, 1793.

Year II begins 22nd September, 1793, and ends 21st September, 1794.

Year III begins 22nd September, 1794, and ends 21st September, 1795.

Year IV begins 22nd September, 1795, and ends 21st September, 1796.

The republican era ends on the 11th Nivôse, Year XIV, the date on which Napoleon re-established the Georgian Calendar.



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

MARAT . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
MADAME ROLAND . . . . .	<i>facing page 16</i>
THE GIRONDINS' LAST SUPPER IN THE CONCIERGERIE BEFORE THEIR EXECUTION. From the painting by Boilly . . . . .	24
THE EXECUTION OF MARIE-ANTOINETTE. From a contemporary print . . . . .	64
FOUQUIER-TINVILLE . . . . .	72
DANTON . . . . .	88
ROBESPIERRE . . . . .	114
DEATH MASK OF ROBESPIERRE . . . . .	128
ROUGET DE LISLE. Author of the "Marseillaise" . . . . .	136
MME. TALLIEN . . . . .	176
TALLIEN . . . . .	192
CHARLOTTE CORDAY. From a portrait by Brard . . . . .	232
CHARLOTTE CORDAY AT THE CONCIERGERIE . . . . .	256
"LE PÈRE DUCHESNE" . . . . .	304



# BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TERROR

## PRISONS AND PRISONERS

### I. THE RECORDS

THERE is nothing more stirring and more romantic than the history of the Paris prisons during the Revolution. Shudders of terror and anguish brood over those gloomy, horrifying gaols in 1793 and 1794. They witnessed the beginning and the growth of romances which have become history, romances ever new, ever extraordinarily passionate, whose ending was nearly always the same: the guillotine.

But the prisons offer yet another attraction to people who are simply interested in historic events as such. There, in the dungeons of the old régime and the feudal epoch, in the sinister galleries whose horizon is bounded by iron gratings, all the heroes as well as all the victims of the Jacobin épopée pass by us. The annals of the Conciergerie are rich in great and famous scenes, and the darkness of its passages and its cells has preserved all their phantoms. There passed Marie-Antoinette; there came the Girondins; there Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Robespierre trod in turn the worn-out steps leading to the executioner's cart. Such mighty

memories have not been lost to history or to human interest.

Public curiosity about what happened in the prisons of the Terror, which were scattered throughout the city, in convents, private mansions, and palaces, dates far back, from the time of the Terror itself, and is easily intelligible. Those who had escaped death had had relations or friends imprisoned. These the 9th Thermidor had providentially released. But they were the fortunate ones. How many others had suffered on the red altar of Notre-Dame-de-Sainte-Guillotine? A passionate interest was attached to the story of their last days, their last moments. They had been seen to die; yes, but how had they been prepared for death? What had been their last wishes? What their last words? And how had they lived in the prison which they only left to disappear for ever?

In order to satisfy the huge public demand for information, after the gradual release of the last prisoners, there appeared a mass of pamphlets giving details about prison life, the talk of the prisoners, the last hours of the condemned. Their success was immense, so much so that several editions were soon exhausted, and, despite the large number of copies in circulation, some of them are bibliographical rarities to-day. The names of a few may be given here for the reader's benefit:

"Mémoires d'un détenu, pour servir à l'histoire de la tyrannie de Robespierre." *Paris, chez la citoyenne Brigitte Mathé, l'an III de la République (par Honoré Riouffe).*

"Tableau historique de la maison Lazare, depuis son ouverture jusqu'au 9 thermidor, où se trouvent des anecdotes précieuses sur chacun des membres du comité



révolutionnaire du Bonnet-Rouge et sur la maison d'arrêt de la rue de Sèvres, par le citoyen \* \* \*, détenu dans ces deux maisons." *Paris, chez Forget et Deroy, an III.*

"Lettre du citoyen Jaubert au citoyen \* \* \*, contenant la relation de ce qui s'est passé à Lazare dans le courant de messidor et thermidor de l'an II de la République." *Paris, 1794.*

"L'agonie de Saint-Lazare sous la tyrannie de Robespierre," *par I. F. N. Du Saulchoy. Paris, chez Chabot, 1795.*

"L'intérieur des maisons d'arrêt," *par Xavier Audoin. Paris, chez Pougin, an III.*

"La nouvelle Chartreuse ou ma détention à Port-Libre," *par le citoyen Vigée. Paris, chez Franklin, an II.*

"Les huit mois d'un détenu aux Madelonnettes." *Paris, chez Pain, an III (par La Chabeaussière).*

"Almanach des prisons ou anecdotes sur le régime intérieur de la Conciergerie, du Luxembourg, etc." *Paris, chez Michel, an III (par Philippe-Edme Coittant et quelques auteurs anonymes).*

"Tableau des prisons de Paris sous le règne de Robespierre, pour faire suite à l'Almanach des prisons, contenant différentes anecdotes sur plusieurs prisonniers, avec les couplets, pièces de vers, lettres et testaments qu'ils ont faits." *Paris, chez Michel, an III.*

Etc., etc., etc. The mere enumeration of the titles would fill a volume. I think I may have given the reader some idea of the abundance of publications concerning the prisons.

When to these are added the Memoirs of the period, which were devoted to Revolution happenings, and played

## 16 BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TERROR

their more or less large parts in the houses of detention, it may be affirmed without fear of mistake that the quantity of available material is unparalleled; and although the historical accuracy of these narratives may be impugned, for they are often carelessly written, one cannot deny them a liveliness, a picturesqueness, and a charm of reality. As such, these narratives may be admitted, because they afford us curious and fresh information about the manner of life in the Revolution prisons.

### II. MADAME ROLAND<sup>1</sup> IN SAINTE-PÉLAGIE

*From her Memoirs, written in prison and published under the title "Appel à l'impartiale postérité."*

"THE name of this house (Sainte-Pélagie), which under the old régime was inhabited by nuns who guarded the victims of lettres de cachet, and who were supposed to be loose in their morals; and its isolation in a remote quarter, filled with what one may well call rabble, and only too well known by the ferocious spirit which caused the

<sup>1</sup> Mme. Roland had been the queen, the inspirer of the Girondins; one of them, Buzot, had even been her lover. As the wife of Roland, the Minister of the Interior, who was so simple, so austere, and had married rather too late in life so young a woman, Mme. Roland *née* Marion Phlipon, being obliged by her position to hold a salon, had welcomed there all the great heads of the Gironde. Though at first it had been frequented by men like Danton and Robespierre, they had soon withdrawn.

With such a past Mme. Roland could not but be suspect on the day after the Girondin's overset. She shared their fate, was arrested and condemned to death by the Revolutionary Tribunal on 18 Brumaire Year II (8th November, 1793). Her husband had fled and hidden at Saint-Radepont. He learnt there about his wife's execution. He came out of hiding, got to the high road and stabbed himself in the heart with his sword-stick. There was a surviving daughter, Eudora, who was taken in by some of Mme. Roland's friends, was brought up by them and died in 1858.



MADAME ROLAND





murder of so many priests in the month of September,<sup>1</sup> did not throw a comforting light on my new asylum.<sup>2</sup>

Whilst my name was being registered as a new-comer, an evil-looking fellow opens my bundle, fingers it about inquisitively ; I notice it at the moment when he is placing on the concierge's desk some printed matter which was in it (it was some newspapers) ; surprised and offended by a proceeding which ought only to take place in the instance of persons secretly imprisoned, I remark that at any rate it ought not to be left to a man to examine with such indecency a woman's night-clothes : he is ordered to leave it alone ; but he is the turnkey of the corridor in which I am to live and I was doomed to see his ugly face twice a day.

I am asked if I want a room with one or with two beds.

' I am alone and don't want a companion.'

' But the room will be too small.'

' I don't care.'

They look and find there is no single-bedded room vacant ; I go into a double-bedded one ; it is 6 ft. long by 2 ft. broad, so that with the two small tables and the two chairs there is hardly any room left. I hear I must pay in advance the rent for the first month ; 15 livres for a single bed ; double that for the two ; I only wanted the use of one, and I would have taken it in a room where it was by itself ; so I only paid 15 livres.

' But there's no water-jug or other convenience ? '

' You must buy them,' observes the ugly fellow,

<sup>1</sup> On 2nd September, 1792, the people, on hearing of the victory of the Prussian troops on French territory, overcome by a fury which likewise partook of fear, murdered a large number of suspects who had been detained in the Saint-Pélagie, L'Abbaye and La Force gaols.

<sup>2</sup> Mme. Roland had previously been detained in the prison of L'Abbaye at St.-Germain-des-Prés.

extremely eager to offer services the selfish aim of which is obvious. I add to my acquisitions a writing-desk, paper, pens, and I settle down. The mistress of the establishment comes and visits me ; I ask about the customs of the place and about my rights ; I learnt that here the State gives nothing for the prisoners.

‘ How then do they live ? ’

‘ There is merely a portion of beans and a pound and a half of bread a day ; but you will not be able to eat either one or the other.’

‘ I can well believe the fare is not like what I am used to ; but I like to know the peculiarities of every situation and to live on the level of that in which I happen to be ; I wish to try it.’

And as a fact I did try it, but whether it was my mood which was not then very favourable, or want of exercise, my stomach revolted against the prison ordinary ; and I had to have recourse to Madame Bouchaud’s<sup>1</sup> cookery. She offered to feed me and I accepted ; I found it healthy, economical in comparison with what I should have got from an outside cook, at this end of the world and in a remote district. A cutlet and a few spoonfuls of vegetable for dinner, nothing for lunch but bread and water ; that was what I ordered and what I had been used to at L’Abbaye.

I set it down here, in order to contrast this frugal manner of living with the denunciations soon afterwards hurled at me in the Observatoire Section about my expenses in Sainte-Pélagie, where I was said to be corrupting the concierge by indulging in orgies of luxury with his family ; whence the indignation of the sans-culottes and the proposal of some of them to hurry me

<sup>1</sup> She was the concierge of Sainte-Pélagie.

out of the world. It all harmonises quite well with the gabble of those women who pretend that by dressing themselves decently they slipped into my house, into the company of old countesses whom I used to gather together at the Home Office, and with the articles in the *Journal de la Montagne*<sup>1</sup> which inserts the letters that are written me by the refractory priests.<sup>2</sup>

I have not yet spoken about the way of life in Sainte-Pélagie.

The part of the building set aside for women is divided into long, very narrow passages, on one of the sides of which are small cells like the one I have described in which I was lodged ; there, under the same roof, on the same level, separated by a thin plastering, I live with prostitutes and murderers. On one side of me is one of those creatures whose trade is to seduce youth and sell innocence ; above me is a woman who has forged assignats and torn to pieces on a high road an individual of her own sex with the help of the monsters in whose band she is enrolled ; every cell is shut with a big lock and key, which a man comes every morning to open, looking insolently to see if you are up or in bed ; next, their tenants meet in the corridors, on the staircases, in a small courtyard or in a damp and stinking hall, a receptacle worthy of such scum.

It may well be imagined I kept persistently to my cell, but the distances are not big enough to save one's ears from the talk which one may expect of such women

<sup>1</sup> The *Journal de la Montagne* appeared for the first time on 1st June, 1793. Its last number bears the date of 28 Brumaire, Year III. It was edited by a certain J.-Ch. Laveaux. It is a Revolution newspaper which is now especially rare.

<sup>2</sup> That is to say, the priests who had refused to take the constitutional oath and were thus in open rebellion against the law.



without its being possible to imagine it unless one has heard it.

That is not all ; the portion of the house in which the men are confined has windows opposite and very close to the women's dwellings ; conversation goes on between similar-minded people ; it is the more grossly licentious because the talkers have nothing to fear ; gestures supplement actions, and the windows serve as the theatre of the most shameless scenes of infamous libertinage.

Such then is the abode which was reserved for the worthy spouse of a man of position ! If that is the reward of virtue on earth let nobody be any more astounded at my contempt for life and at the resolution with which I shall be able to meet death.

It never had appeared fearsome to me ; but to-day I find charms in it ; I should have embraced it with transport, if this young girl [Eudora] did not invite me not to abandon her yet, if my voluntary disappearance did not lend weapons to calumny against a husband whose glory I should uphold if they ventured to hale me before a tribunal.

It was not long before my keepers suffered more than myself at my situation and became anxious to mitigate it ; the excessive heat in July made my cell uninhabitable. The paper with which I surrounded the gratings did not prevent the sun from blazing down upon the whitened walls, and although the windows remained open at night, the burning and concentrated air of the daytime was never cooled by it.

The wife of the concierge invited me to spend the days in her rooms and I accepted her offers for the afternoons ; it was then I thought of hiring a ' forte-piano,' which I had put in her apartment and with which I some-

times amused myself. But how many modifications did my moral situation suffer in that interval! The disturbances in some Departments seemed to signify the righteous indignation by which they were stirred at the outrages done to their Deputies, and their determination to take their revenge for it by the re-establishment of national representation in its integrity.<sup>1</sup>

It was not enough for Mme. Bouchaud that she had offered me the use of her apartment; she felt I used it with great discretion; she thought of getting me out of my dreary cell and lodging me in a nice room with a fire-place on the ground-floor underneath her own room.

Behold me therefore delivered from the awful surroundings that tortured me, after three weeks' residence; I shall not again have to walk twice a day through the midst of the women of my neighbourhood so as to get away from them for a time; I shall not again see the evil-looking turnkey opening my door each morning, and each night drawing the big bolt on me as on a criminal who must be severely looked after. It is Mme. Bouchaud's pleasant face that appears to me, it is she whose delicate attentions I feel at every turn; everything bears witness to the desire to please me which fills her, even to the jasmine put in front of my window, the grating of which is adorned with its flexible branches; I regard myself as her lodger and forget my captivity. All my instruments of study or of amusement are gathered about me; my 'forte-piano' is near my bed, cupboards give me the chance of arranging my small effects so as to give my asylum the nice appearance I like. . . .

<sup>1</sup> The prisoner means here the disturbances in the South and Calvados raised by the Girondins who had fled there. This upheaval, known as the "Federalist Revolt," was severely, mercilessly put down by the Convention.

## 22 BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TERROR

I have the slight unpleasantness of a gendarme whose post is exactly opposite my window (the curtains of which I must always keep closed) coming near occasionally to listen to what is being said when I am not alone ; I have to endure the weariness of the dreadful barking of three big dogs whose kennel is ten paces off ; I have also on one side a large room which is proudly called the Council Chamber, and is occupied by the police administrators when they come to make an interrogatory.

I owe to this vicinity a knowledge of strange scenes about which I am going to say a word. Two men whose names I knew but have forgotten, or which I do not mention because such scoundrels do not deserve such record, had been imprisoned for malversations in the administration of the troops in which they were employed ; they had as their friends and accomplices persons of their kind who came and visited them, and those persons were actually police administrators. In this character the latter, who were charged with the maintenance of order in the prisons, with superintending the concierges, etc., used to come once or twice a week to Sainte-Pélagie with other common friends, to the number of ten or twelve, sometimes more ; they had the two dear prisoners brought to the Council Chamber, and there, asking the concierge for capons, chickens, eggs, wine, liqueurs, coffee, etc., they would consume them at his expense and carry on a continuous orgy for four or five hours.

You would never conceive and certainly I shall not try to describe the brutal merriment, the filth of the talk, the disgracefulness of these festivities ; the word ' patriotism ' applied stupidly and repeated emphatically with regard to the scaffold whither it is fitting to send all



'suspects,' and the latter term applied to everybody who has received education or possesses a fortune he has not recently stolen; the disgusting kisses of those mouths full of wine noisily applied to the faces of the arrivals, and repeating the music at the moment of departure; the dirty jokes of immoral and shameless men; and the insane haughtiness of atrocious fools who only think about denunciations and use all their knowledge for incarcerating people of position."

Like most of the condemned, Mme. Roland had foreseen her fate. So she busied herself well in advance with sending farewells to the beloved ones she was leaving behind her, as witness her letter to her daughter, written 18th October, 1793, twenty-one days before her execution, the two other letters here quoted, and the famous apostrophe to Buzot,<sup>1</sup> "*And you whom I do not dare to name!*—" which revealed Mme. Roland's passion for the Girondin.

"TO MY DAUGHTER.

"18th October, 1793.

"I do not know, my little friend, whether it will be allowed me to see you or write to you again. *Remember your mother.* These few words include all the best I can tell you. You have seen me happy through my care in

<sup>1</sup> Buzot, an advocate at Evreux, had been named a Deputy of the Tiers Etat ("Third Estate") at the Etats-Généraux ("States-General") of 1789. He was then twenty-nine. His political career was brilliant. He was uncommonly handsome, a fact which was not without exercising a deep influence on the ardent and sensitive heart of Mme. Roland, who in her "*Mémoires*" addressed to him some burning letters which revealed the liaison. Buzot, who was proscribed with his colleagues, escaped to the Gironde, where, being traced and pursued, he committed suicide in one of the fields of St.-Emilion. Several days after his death the corpse was found in a field half-eaten by dogs.

fulfilling my duties and being useful to those who suffer. There is no other way of living. You have seen me peaceful in misfortune and captivity, because I had no remorse, and had the memory and the joy which good deeds leave after them. Neither are there any other means of enduring the ills of life and the changes of fate.

"Perhaps, and I hope so, you are not intended for trials like mine ; but there are others against which none the less you will have to defend yourself. A strict and busy life is the chief preservative against all such perils, and necessity as well as wisdom imposes on you the law of serious work.

"Be worthy of your parents ; they leave you great examples ; and if you know how to profit by them, you will not pass a restless life. Good-bye, darling child, you whom I have fed with my milk, and whom I wish to inspire with all my feelings. A time will come when you will be able to judge of all the constraint I am putting on myself at this instant so as not to break down with tenderness for your sweet image. I press you to my bosom.

"Good-bye, my Eudora."

. . . . .

"TO THE PERSON CHARGED WITH THE CARE OF  
MY DAUGHTER.

"You owe to misfortune, citizenness, and you have with you, because of the trust placed in you, a charge who is very dear to me. I believe in the excellence of the choice of friendship ; that is the foundation of my hopes regarding the object of the anxieties which make my present situation distressing. Courage makes easy the



THE GIRONDINS' LAST SUPPER IN THE CONCIERGERIE BEFORE THEIR EXECUTION

From the painting by Boilly





endurance of ills special to ourselves, but a mother's breast is difficult to calm as to the fate of a child from whom she feels snatched away. May my dear Eudora be preserved, I do not say from pains similar to those I am experiencing, but from dangers infinitely more redoubtable, to my mind ! May she keep her innocence and succeed one day in fulfilling, in quiet and obscurity, the touching duties of wife and mother.

"She needs to be prepared for it by an active and regular life, and to combine with the taste for the duties of her sex some accomplishments whose exercise will perhaps be needful to her ; I know she has in your home the means of doing so. You have a son, and I dared not tell you the idea troubled me ; but you have also a daughter, and I felt reassured. That is saying enough, to a soul of sensibility, to a mother and to a person such as I imagine you. My position gives rise to strong affections, it does not harmonise with long expressions. Receive my prayers and gratitude.

"THE MOTHER OF EUDORA."<sup>1</sup>

. . . . .

#### THE APOSTROPHE TO BUZOT.

"And you whom I do not dare name ! You whom people will know better one day, pitying our common misfortunes ; you whom the most terrible of the passions did not prevent respecting the barriers of virtue, will you be afflicted to see me precede you to the place where we shall be able to love one another without crime, where

<sup>1</sup> One of Mme. Roland's friends, the naturalist Bosc, had hidden Eudora in Mme. Godefroid's boarding-house. This letter is addressed to the latter. Eudora afterwards married Champlâtreux, the son of another friend of the Rolands, and died obscurely in 1858.

nothing will hinder us from being united ?<sup>1</sup> There deadly prejudices are silent and arbitrary exclusions, hateful passions and all the species of tyranny. I am going to wait for you there and rest there ; remain yet down here, if there is a shelter open to honourableness ; stay to accuse the injustice which has proscribed you. But if obstinate misfortune makes some enemy track your steps, do not suffer a mercenary hand to be raised against you, die free as you were able to live, and let that generous courage which constitutes my justification finish it by your last act.

“ Farewell—No, from you alone I am not separated ; to abandon the earth is for us to meet again.”

“ TO MY MAID, FLEURY.

“ My dear maid, you whose fidelity, services and affection have been dear to me for thirteen years, receive my embraces and my farewell.

“ Keep the memory of what I was. It will console you for what I am experiencing ; people of worth pass into glory when they descend into the grave. My sorrows are about to end ; calm yours and think of the peace I am about to enjoy, without anyone henceforth being able to trouble it. Tell my Agathe<sup>2</sup> that I take with me the sweetness of having been cherished by her from my childhood, and sorrow at being unable to prove to her my attachment. I should have liked to be of use to you, at any rate let me not distress you.

“ Good-bye, my poor maid, good-bye.”

<sup>1</sup> This passage was written at the moment when the prisoner contemplated suicide by refusing nourishment, a plan she gave up a few hours after.

<sup>2</sup> Mme. Roland's nurse.



## III. LIFE IN SAINTE-PÉLAGIE

*An anonymous account from the " Almanach des Prisons," Year III.*

" THE prisoners who were secretly detained, in order to beguile the boredom by which they were eaten up, conceived the idea of forming among themselves a sort of club, whose meetings were fixed for 8 p.m. Although the doors of each room were of prodigious thickness they had perceived that by shouting rather loudly it was possible to make oneself heard from one end of the corridor to the other.

The first to have the curious notion of such an amusement was the Citizen Marino, ex-Administrator of Police, Member of the Commune of 10th August, who was suspended in his municipal function till the day of his arrest. By means of this invention we informed ourselves reciprocally and in proper order of everything that had been ascertained from the turnkeys in the course of the day ; and, in order not to be understood in case we should be overheard by one of them, or of the gendarmes who were posted beneath the windows, instead of saying : ' I have heard so and so ' ; we used to say : ' I've dreamt so and so.'<sup>1</sup>

The condition requisite for becoming a member of the society was that you must be neither a false witness nor a forger of assignats. When a candidate (such was the name given to newly arrived prisoners) arrived, the President was charged with asking him in the name of the Society for his name, his quality, his residence and

<sup>1</sup> " It was doubtless the infancy of the argot," says M. Wallon, " and if the gendarmes could not understand it, it was the infancy of the gendarmerie." H. Wallon, " La Terreur " : Paris, 1872, 8vo, p. 112.

## 28 BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TERROR

the cause of his arrest ; and when it was clearly recognised that he had not been guilty of the offences that meant his exclusion, the President proclaimed him a Member of the Society in these terms :

‘ Citizen, the prisoners detained in this corridor deem you worthy of being their brother and friend. The bond between them is misfortune and good faith ; they require no other guarantees from you than those. I send you the fraternal welcome.’

And the Club, to avoid the noise of hand-clapping would shout as a mark of applause :

‘ Good ! good ! ’

The meetings constantly took place till the month of Messidor, when the prisoners obtained from the police administration permission to walk in the corridors, two hours in the morning and the same at night. They then told each other openly what before they only dared tell parabolically. There even resulted some special friendships between several of them whose characters were in perfect sympathy.

X { One day Cortey, a grocer, who in complicity with  
X { the ci-devant Count de Laval-Montmorency, the ex-  
Marquis de Pons, Sombreuil, the ci-devant Governor of  
the Invalides, etc.,<sup>1</sup> was accused of conspiracy and  
afterwards guillotined, was making signals through the  
window of the corridor to the ci-devant Princess of Monaco  
and blowing her kisses ; the Marquis de Pons who was  
present observed haughtily to him :

‘ You must have been very badly brought up, Monsieur Cortey, to grow familiar with a person of that rank ; it is not astonishing they want to guillotine you with us, since you treat us as an equal.’

<sup>1</sup> All guillotined with Marnis, 29 Prairial, Year II (17th June, 1794).

The days sped on without producing anything remarkable until 9th Thermidor, when we saw the arrival of Lavalette, Dumas, an aide-de-camp of Hanriot's and several other of Robespierre's partisans and accomplices. On seeing them everyone asked himself who had had the power thus to upset these men who were once so strong in their protectors and their popularity. We made various guesses on the subject, none of which turned out to have any relation to the true motive of their arrest.

At night an Extraordinary Meeting was demanded for them ; it took place. The President, in the name of the club, put them the usual queries. None of them chose to answer. In revenge for their obstinate silence everybody started cracking the most piquant jokes about them.

'Now,' we said, 'now that we have among us the intimate confidant of the Doge and the Supreme Magistrate of the Republic we may grow calm. It would be fine to witness the coming of the Doge himself ; in such an event we could not help sending him a numerous deputation and giving him an imposing guard, for his escort in case Doctor Sanson should come to fetch his Majesty in order to perform on him the little operation the success of which he used to lead us to expect.'

Other jests of the kind had hardly ended when the sound of the tocsin was heard ; it excited attention. It was believed that a considerable fire had broken out in one of the Paris quarters ; but we soon changed our minds when we heard one of the wicket-keepers, a man called Simon, shout to his dog :

'Lie down, Robespierre !'



## 30 BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TERROR

Immediately after the Duplaix<sup>1</sup> family was brought in. One of the prisoners exclaimed :

‘ I announce to you Robespierre’s Ganymede and his first minister.’

We then learnt, after several questions had been put to them, all the circumstances attending the tyrant’s fall.

Next morning, as soon as the women noticed all these persons mixed up with the other prisoners, they cried :

‘ You are with your sacrificers, you ought to knock those beggars down !’

We contented ourselves with playing them some rather rough tricks, because we wanted them for the purpose of getting to know all the details of the revolt.

On 11th Thermidor, about 9 o’clock, the rumour spread that the woman Duplaix had hung herself during the night ; one of the citizens announced the news, saying :

‘ Citizens, I inform you that the Dowager-Queen is just now in a rather grievous excess of health.’

‘ What is it ? What’s happened ?’ exclaimed the two Duplaix, father and son, who did not know what he meant.

‘ Citizens,’ he added, ‘ it is an event of great mourning for France, we have no longer a princess.’

What amused us most in all this was that on this very night Duplaix junior gave ten francs to one of the wicket-keepers who was to go and get information about the situation of his mother, whom he believed to be free, and that this same fellow came and told him she was enjoying

<sup>1</sup> It should be spelt “ Duplay.” This, it is well known, was the name of the greengrocer in the Rue Saint-Honoré at whose house dwelt Robespierre. At the latter’s fall the whole family was arrested, but nevertheless set free later on.

perfect health. He remained very long in that belief ; a fact which was worth to the unscrupulous wicket-keeper at least fifty écus for supposed commissions."

#### IV. LIFE IN THE CONCIERGERIE

*An anonymous account from " L'Almanach des Prisons, an III."*

"EVERYBODY knows the entrance to this prison which is used for the incarceration of those whom the law summons before the magistrates, as being accused of offences against public order and safety. But how few of the people who pass through the superb galleries, the immense halls of the Palais, dream that at their feet lie human beings like themselves, crammed into cells ; especially since the revolutionary upheavals caused an overflow of the victims even into the disgusting corridors which lead to those dwellings of misery, despair and death.

What a contrast ! Above are fine shops,<sup>1</sup> filled with perfumes, with all the most elegant refinements offered by fashion to coquetry ; there are obliging shop-assistants who invite the attention of the curious ; libraries laden with books whose sole theme is philosophy and humanity ; below, no further off than the thickness of a vault, are bolts, gratings, groans, rags, an insupportable stench, a poisonous air, and drunken gaolers, speaking an extraordinary tongue, equipped with huge keys, and followed by dogs calculated, like themselves, to spread fear.

<sup>1</sup> These shops, which cumbered the Palais de Justice, were let to linen-drapers, booksellers, public writers, stationers, ironmongers and in particular to bootmakers. This state of things lasted till 1798. In that year the merchants were driven out of the Temple of Themis, and the demolition of the shops began. However, according to the *Journal de Paris*, it was only on 2nd May, 1808, that the cleaning of the Palais was completed and ended by a general whitewashing.

The houses of detention which have been newly called into being: the Luxembourg, the Port-Libre,<sup>1</sup> the Carmes, the Bénédictins Anglais, Saint-Lazare, the Anglaises du Faubourg, Saint-Antoine, etc., all these establishments are merely dandified prisons; the gaolers there are polite, they talk an intelligible language, and when you are transferred thither from the Conciergerie, the Pélagie, the Madelonnettes, or La Force, you would be tempted to take them for Academicians. Oh! you who have lived only in those houses, if you want to know what being in prison means, try and get yourself put in the Conciergerie!

The first entrance is closed by two wickets.<sup>2</sup> These wickets are about three feet from one another. They are each of them kept by a turnkey. All the turnkeys are not admitted indiscriminately to the honour of these first wickets. A selection is made of the sturdiest and those possessing the keenest eyesight. 'For such duties,' it is said, 'men must have heads on their shoulders.' Accordingly, candidates sometimes wait a long time. A bouquet set over the gate announces a fresh promotion. On that day the lucky one has his hair dressed by a barber, puts on his best clothes. His gratified and self-sufficient air proclaims that he feels his dignity, and that he is not beneath the choice with which he has been honoured. At night gallons of wine wind up the happy day with redoubled enjoyment.

In the first room, called 'guichet,' as I have already

<sup>1</sup> To-day the Maternité, in the Boulevard de Port-Royal.

<sup>2</sup> A wicket (*guichet*) is a small gate about 3½ feet high, inserted in a larger gate. When you enter you must raise your foot and considerably lower your head; so that if you don't break your nose on your knee, you run the risk of breaking your head against the transverse bar of the large gate, which has happened more than once. The first entrance-room is also called 'guichet.'



stated, sitting in an arm-chair at the end of a big table is the Governor of the prison, or at any rate the respectable half of him, or the oldest of the turnkeys who in that case represents him. Those governors have become in our time very considerable personages. The friends or relations of the prisoners usually pay very assiduous court to the concierge Richard, in order to get a wicket opened. Deep bows are made to him. When he is in a good humour he smiles, when on the other hand he is ill-tempered he frowns; he is Jupiter who makes Olympus tremble with a glance. So prisoners are ever careful to watch for his favourable moments, and then they outdo themselves in the humble presenting of their petition.

From that arm-chair emanate the orders for the management of the establishment. Before that arm-chair are settled the quarrels of the wicket-keepers among themselves and those between the wicket-keepers and the prisoners; to that arm-chair the poor prisoners bring their humble requests when they obtain the favour of being admitted there; from that arm-chair sometimes proceeds a look of protection which comforts, and often a glance which strikes as with a thunderbolt.

For the rest, the wife of Richard controls her establishment in an astounding way: nobody has a better memory than she, or more presence of mind, or an exacter knowledge of the minutest details.<sup>1</sup>

Besides the door-keeper and his representative there is in the wicket an old turnkey who wanders up and down. Without appearing to be so, he is the inspector of those

<sup>1</sup> The Citizeness Richard, whom the prisoners in general used to praise, was murdered by a desperate convict maddened by a sentence of twenty years in irons: at the moment the kindly woman handed him a basin of soup he stabbed her in the heart with a knife; she died in a few minutes. This happened in Messidor, Year IV (1796).

## 34 BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TERROR

who go in or out. When there is any uncertainty, vigilant words are heard issuing from the arm-chair: 'Allumez le miston!' ('allumez' is slang for 'look sharply at'; 'miston' slang for 'individual').

The wicket-keeper repeats the phrase to his comrades who are on duty at the gates. When a new prisoner enters the wicket-keepers are advised to 'allumez le miston,' so that he may be generally known, and be unable to make himself out a stranger.

On the left hand on entering the wicket is the greffe. This room is divided in two by bars. One half is devoted to writing, the other half is the place reserved for the condemned; there they have sometimes waited thirty-six hours for the fatal moment when the executioner of the sentences (whom the wicket-keepers in their slang call 'tole') makes them go through the dread preparations for their punishment. I cannot pen these lines without the cruellest memories, without the most heart-breaking impressions overwhelming my soul.

From the greffe you go on the same level (but after first opening some huge doors) into certain cells called the 'Mouse-trap.' Rather should they be named the 'Rat-trap.' A citizen of the name of Beauregard, a man as honourable as he was kindly, who was acquitted by the Revolutionary Tribunal, was put in those cells on entry, and the rats ate his breeches in several places.

The light hardly penetrates those cells; the straw of which the prisoners' beds are composed being quickly corrupted by the want of air, and the stench of the pails (in prison slang, *griaches*) which the prisoners use for every purpose, exhales such infection that even in the greffe one is poisoned when the gates are opened. It is the same with the other cells; and in such dreadful lodgings

men who have afterwards been admitted to be innocent have passed whole months !

Opposite the entrance-gate is the wicket leading to the women's courtyard, to the infirmary, and in general to what is called, I know not why, the 'côté des douze' ('side of the twelve'). We shall return to it later.

On the right at two angles are windows which very imperfectly light two cabinets where the gaolers on guard lie during the night ; these cabinets are also reserved for women who have been condemned to death. Between the two angles is a third, leading to the 'préau' ; it is the best part of the prison, and the best fitted to attract the observer's attention. To get there, four 'guichets' have to be crossed. You leave on the left the Chapel and the Council Chamber, two rooms which have likewise been provided with beds during these last days ; the second was occupied by Louis XVI's widow.

The prisoners are classified as either 'à la pistole,' or 'à la paille,' or in the cells. They are under different regulations. The cells are only opened with the object of furnishing nourishment, paying visits and emptying the 'griaches' (pails).

The rooms called 'de la paille' only differ from the cells in that their unfortunate lodgers are bound to leave them between 8 and 9 a.m. They are put back about an hour before sunset. The doors of their cells are shut during the daytime, and they are obliged to mess about in the courtyard, or if it rains to huddle together in the galleries surrounding it, where they are infected with horrible stench.

Moreover, there are the same inconveniences in their hideous rooms : no air, putrid straw. Being crushed

- also  
Du Ba



## 36 BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TERROR

together in one single hole up to the number of 50, with their noses exposed to outrageous garbage-stink, they infect each other with their illnesses, the results of the filth amid which they live. Go and visit the cells which have been constructed in the big towers you can see from the Quai de l'Horloge, those which are called the 'Grand César,' 'Bombée,' 'Saint-Vincent,' 'Bel-Air,' etc., and say then if death is not preferable to a sojourn in one of them.

Do not imagine that the lodging inconveniences are the only ones the prisoners have to endure ; in order to judge to what depths of humiliation, of degradation it is possible to bring men, you should assist at the closing of the doors and the roll-call preceding it.

Imagine three or four drunken jailers with half a dozen dogs in leash, and holding in their hands an incorrect list which they are unable to read. They shout a name, nobody recognises it ; they swear, storm, threaten ; they call again ; there are explanations, they are helped ; one at last succeeds in understanding whom they meant to name. They make the prisoners enter, counting them ; they make a mistake ; then, their rage always on the increase, they order them to go out ; there are goings-out and comings-back and further mistakes, and sometimes it is only after three or four trials that their dimmed eyes arrive at length at the certainty of the number being complete.

After crossing the first grating (I have already observed there are four of them) you find yourself in an enclosed space formed entirely of iron bars. So long as communication with the outside world existed it was there that the prisoners of that part used to see their visitors.

Women, whose sensibility is greater than men's, whose courage is more resolute, whose soul is more pitiful, more inclined to help, to share misfortune, women are almost the only beings who ventured to penetrate there, and, it must be admitted, it was they especially whom one liked to receive there. It is true the pleasure was sometimes troubled by the sight of the unhappy people, sentenced to death, who were brought down from the Tribunal and crossed the enclosure which I am speaking of. There then fell an instant's silence, everyone looked at each other in fear, then there would be an affectionate kissing and embracing, and matters took imperceptibly their ordinary course.

The entrance wicket, occupied in the same way by the prisoners of the 'côté des douze,' afforded a spectacle no less picturesque. What indeed could be more singular to an observant eye?

There are women and their husbands, sitting on benches against the walls; some are speaking with as much security and cheerfulness as if everything were rose-coloured; others are displaying marks of tender affection, shedding tears. In the 'greffe' are men sentenced to death, who sometimes are singing. Through one of the windows of those cabinets I have mentioned a poor woman can be seen on her bed of anguish watched by a gendarme, and awaiting pale-faced the moment of her punishment. The wickets swarm with gendarmes; some are bringing in prisoners, whose hands are untied, and who are rushed into the cells; others are asking for other prisoners in order to transfer them. They bind them, and take them along with them, whilst a haggard-eyed, insolent-voiced usher gives orders, puts himself in a temper, and thinks himself a hero, because he insults

### 38 BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TERROR

with impunity unfortunate persons who cannot answer him with blows from a stick.

Let us return to the 'côté des douze.' This division has also a yard occupied by women. The men's side has no other promenade but a dark corridor, in which it is necessary during the day to keep a light burning, and a small hall separated by a grating from the women's yard. The men may speak to the women through the grating and more than once the joys of a mutual affection have enabled poor prisoners to forget the horror of their residence.

The women's rooms are similarly divided into rooms 'à la pistole' and rooms 'à la paille.' The 'pistoless' occupy the first floor; the rooms of the 'pailleuses'<sup>1</sup> are on the ground floor behind an arcade; they are dark, damp, as unhealthy as dirty. The Government might well set about making them more healthy, never forgetting that innocence has been obliged to live in them. Regulations ought also to be drawn up which would not tend to degrade the persons who are consigned there.

In this part are only rooms 'à la pistole' for men, that is to say they have to pay for the hire of the beds they occupy. There are as many beds in a room as it can hold. At first people used to pay for a bed 27 livres 12 sous the first month, and 22 livres 10 sous the following months. The price has now been reduced to 15 livres a month. The same bed has often been hired several times in a single month, so that the Conciergerie, as far as productiveness is concerned, is the first lodging-house in Paris."

<sup>1</sup> 'Pailleux' or 'pailleuses' are the terms applied to men and women who not possessing the means of paying for hire of a bed are obliged to lie on straw.



*From Nougaret's " Histoire des Prisons de Paris et des Départements."*

" I remained six months in the Conciergerie, a prey to the most horrible anxieties ; I saw the moving picture of nobles, priests, merchants, bankers, men of letters, artisans, agriculturists and sansculottes. The scythe of the bloody Tribunal mowed down ninety-nine hundredths of them.

It was in the class of nobles that I came across the majority of the anti-revolutionaries, partisans of royalty, who wept over Louis XVI's grave and called aloud for the old régime.

I saw priests worthy of respect who used to say their breviary as they lay down to rest, who have performed in their villages deeds of virtue and kindness ; they would strive to renew trust and hope in their prison companions by talking to them of Christ's miracles.

I saw merchants and bankers who had received their bill of accusation, and who, before getting into bed, would draw up a summary of their capital, consult Borème, and compose company rules.

I saw sansculottes, excellent patriots, red-hot revolutionaries, sacrificed to obscure hatreds.

I saw agriculturists telling their prayers morning and night, commending themselves to the good Virgin Mary, making the sign of the Cross when there was thunder, detesting the robberies of their emigrated lord, but sorrowing for the Masses, the sermons and the exhortations of their old vicar who had refused to take the oath to the new government.

I saw some very giddy, very devil-may-care young men gracefully pirouetting between two wickets, taste-

fully singing the favourite song of the day and making epigrams on the Government in power.

And it was people like that who were guillotined."

*From the "Mémoires d'un détenu, pour servir à l'histoire de la tyrannie de Robespierre, an III," by Honoré Riouffe.<sup>1</sup>*

"It is a very noteworthy number, this number of our room, No. 13; we used to make sport there even of the Tribunal itself.

Eighteen beds, connected with each other, were separated by high planks between which each person was, as it were, swallowed up; on each bed sat a jurymen. The accused, set on a table, had them facing him; the greffier and the Public Prosecutor occupied the floor.

Our meetings ordinarily used to start at midnight

<sup>1</sup> Honoré Riouffe, a Girondin in opinion, without, however, being a deputy, was born at Rouen 1st April, 1764, of an excellent Southern family. His father was one of the good surgeons of his day. The son preferred the pen to the scalpel, and became a man of letters. If we may credit his contemporaries, he had some successes which certainly do not appear to have left much of their brilliance behind them.

From the earliest hours of the Revolution he was interested in all its episodes, welcoming with enthusiastic fury all the promises of the new régime. Quickly connecting himself with Girondin politics, he soon became suspect with all those of his party. Arrested at Bordeaux, he was transferred to Paris in a carriage escorted by gendarmes. Of his journey he has left a fearful story, exaggerated, amplified with the rhetoric peculiar to the epoch. At first incarcerated with the vilest scoundrels in the Conciergerie, he owed it to the Girondin Ducos that he was put in a less awful part of the gaol. This fact enabled him to be present at the last hours spent by the condemned in the prison.

Set free after Robespierre's overthrow, Riouffe published his "Mémoires," which enjoyed a fair success. He did not abandon political life, but followed the fortunes of Bonaparte, who on becoming Emperor named him prefect of the Department of the Côte-d'Or and next of the Department of La Meurthe. He died in November, 1814, whilst exercising this function, of typhus brought into France by the sick of the Grand Army. He was a baron of the Empire.

when, being bolted in beneath our gloomy vaults, we were almost sure not to be disturbed again.

The accused was always condemned ; could it be otherwise, as it was the Revolutionary Tribunal ? Once condemned, the horrible course of preparation ensued ; the patient's hands were bound and he came to the bar of a bed to receive the blow of the steel which fell on his head. By one of those chances which were very common in Revolution times the Public Prosecutor became himself the accused and was consequently condemned. He underwent his sentence ; but suddenly lo and behold ! he returned covered with a white sheet to affright us with the picture of the torments he was experiencing in hell ; he recounted to us his crimes, foretold to the jurymen what would happen to them ; that they would be immersed in pools of blood, shut up in iron cages and that they would terrify the world by the horror of their punishments, even as they had frightened it by their unheard-of cruelties.

There was in our room a man called Lapagne, the Pampin<sup>1</sup> of No. 13. He had been the Mayor of Ingouville, a suburb of Havre, where he had been sent by the Jacobins, and at this period he was well worthy of serving them, seeing he had been head of a band of thieves and sentenced to be broken on the wheel for murder, under the old régime.

Our ghost goes and seizes him by the collar and abusing him for all his offences with fearful curses he drags him off to hell. ' Lapagne ! Lapagne ! Lapagne ! ' he cries in mournful tones. Lapagne followed him, dumbstruck, terrified. His fright added picturesqueness

<sup>1</sup> This Pampin was an old thief, limping and one-eyed, who had been one of the first of Riouffe's prison companions in the cell where he had been incarcerated on his arrival at the Conciergerie.



to the scene which was lit up by a single candle, allowing the darkness to prevail peaceably in two-thirds of the cell.

Thus we used to joke in death's very bosom and in our prophetic sport we used to tell the truth in the very midst of spies and executioners.

Our constant refrain among them was: Liberty, equality, fraternity; we had even consecrated this oath in a certain religious ceremony which owed its origin to rather amusing circumstances. We had in that same room a worthy Benedictine, a genuine 'illuminatus,' with his hands always folded on his chest like a picture of Saint Benedict, who was especially beset with a madness for proselytising.

The amiable Ducourneau, a young man from Bordeaux, full of wit, talent and gaiety, whom they afterwards murdered for Federalism,<sup>1</sup> was the Devil of this new Saint Anthony. Now he would steal his breviary, and Saint Anthony would run after the Devil, flourishing the broom-handle; now he would put out his candle; in fact, he would play him as many tricks as Satan caused Saint Anthony to experience of temptations; sometimes he would blend with the psalms sung by the worthy man the refrain of a rowdy song. But the holy man did not lose courage; ever watching and ever praying he kept his eyes on his breviary and on Ducourneau who, one-eyed, short of stature and dark of complexion, his face stamped with mischievousness, perfectly fulfilled the idea one might conceive of a devil's imp; whilst the other, on the alert, had the look of a holy man at grips with him. The monk offered up his sufferings

<sup>1</sup> By the Federalist revolt are meant the troubles which brought about risings in the Departments and were caused by the fall and proscription of the Girondins. Caen, Bordeaux, Lyons, were the principal centres of the Federalist movement.

to God, and showed himself the more long-enduring because he had good hope that in the long run he would convert at least one or two of them.

As a reply to his eternal sermons, being weary of argument, we conceived the notion of raising altar against altar. We soon had a cult, hymns and choristers. Then truly did the saintly father despair of our salvation. He used to ogle some of us as being made of 'better stuff' and easier to convert; he no longer cherished any hope when he saw them all ranged under the flag of 'Ibrascha'—that was the name of our god.

What completed the breaking of his heart was the following incident: the Spaniard<sup>1</sup> was at the time in his death-agony; the monk used to prowl around him as around a cherished prey. Restore a Spaniard to the circle of the Church, what beatitude! But the Spaniard, as he dies, pulls himself together and cries: 'Vive Ibrascha!' The monk was clean beside himself.

He pretended to sleep when we began our service; but he could not long contain himself. No sooner had our chief chorister intoned than the angry monk sprang at once to his feet, singing the *De Profundis* at the top of his voice; his weak and worn-out organ could not drown the powerful and sonorous tones of two young anchorites we had—Bailleul and Mathieu. So he overwhelmed us with insults, treated our god as an impostor, and maintained that he would moreover prove him so. He rushed, like Polyeucte, to smash up our altar; and not thinking he was yet uproarious enough, being armed with holy zeal and a piece of wood, he made an awful noise by striking at the door.

In such fashion did the impious one disturb our

<sup>1</sup> One of the prisoners in room 13.

august ceremonies: what sacrilege! Accordingly we lavished on him the epithets of an unbelieving and free-thinking philosopher. The singular thing is that the worthy fellow found his pleasure in these tribulations and never wanted to change rooms; in spite of our horseplay we liked him and we respected him; he knew it, of course. We sincerely bewailed him when we heard of his murder by the Tribunal. He was entangled in the Luxembourg conspiracy.

As you see, our cells often resounded with long outbursts of senseless merriment. If anything proves the imperfection of our nature and all its wretched limitations, it is the medley of opposing feelings by which it is affected almost at one and the same time. Its pain escapes it as its pleasure does. In the eyes of an impassive being human existence would resemble a delirious dream.

. . . . .

"I was placed in another part of the Conciergerie. I quitted the den of justly fettered crime; I entered the temple of persecuted virtue. Vergniaud, Gensonné, Brissot, Ducos, Fonfrède, Valazé, Duchâtel and their colleagues<sup>1</sup> were the guests I found installed in my new

<sup>1</sup> After Louis XVI's death the two hostile parties in the Convention resumed a struggle which the King's trial had interrupted. The Girondins and the Mountaineers (so called because of the high part in the Convention where they used to sit) came to blows again. Everybody knows the incidents of the great fight. The Gironde was beaten, its deputies made outlaws and handed over to the Revolutionary Tribunal. The chiefs of the Girondins were Vergniaud, Gensonné, Brissot, Ducos, Fonfrède, Valazé, Duchâtel. Being at first kept under observation in their homes, some profited by it to make their escape. In consequence, on 24th June, 1793, the Convention resolved that deputies laid under arrest should be transferred to national buildings. These national buildings were convents, mansions, palaces, altered into prisons. The Girondins went to the Luxembourg, but at the time of their trial were transferred to the Conciergerie, where Riouffe met them.



abode. During the whole year I have been living in it I always see before me the shades of those great men hovering over my head and reviving my courage. The feeling of admiration soon gave place to that of gratitude. I learnt it was owing to Ducos's solicitations that I had left my former place of confinement; that is to say, I owe him my life, which is doubtless very gloomy just now at this disastrous period, but which I am pleased to know I owe him. What a kindly and interesting young fellow! He had seen me but once in the world and he welcomed me like a brother.

Curiosity is awakened by those famous names, but I have small means of satisfying it; I came two days before their condemnation and as if to be a witness of their deaths. France and Europe know about their trials, if such a name can be given to the most atrocious proscription; it was from beginning to end a most solemn violation of all rights, even to the point of finally depriving them of that of defending themselves.<sup>1</sup>

All those sturdy athletes, who almost united in themselves the whole of French eloquence, were dragged into the arena, laden everywhere with chains; they were forbidden to use their strength. Vergniaud on one single occasion, with the flexibility of voice which stirs every soul, displayed a spark of his talent; every eye dropped tears, tyranny grew pale and snatched at the decree which put the seal on the glory of the proscribed and the infamy of the proscribers.

They were all calm without ostentation, although not one of them blinded himself with the mirage of hope.

<sup>1</sup> "Lasource, after his condemnation, quoted to them the following saying of one of the ancients: 'I am dying at a moment when the people has lost its reason.—All of you will die on the day it shall have recovered it.'" (Note by Riouffe.)

Their souls were at such height that you could not approach them with the commonplaces of ordinary consolation. Brissot, grave and reflective, had the mien of a sage battling against misfortune, and if a certain anxiety was visible on his face, it was easy to see it was solely because of his country. Gensonné, retiring into his inner self, appeared to be afraid to soil his mouth by uttering the names of his murderers. Not a word about his position fell from him, but general reflections about the people's happiness, for whom he was offering up his prayers. Vergniaud, now serious and now less serious, rehearsed to us a quantity of jocular verse with which his memory was stored, and sometimes enabled us to enjoy the last accents of the lofty eloquence which was already lost to the universe, because the barbarians prevented him from speaking.

As for Valazé, his eyes had I know not what of divine light in them. A sweet and serene smile never left his lips ; he was enjoying his glorious death in foretaste. You could see he was already free and that he had found the guarantee of his freedom in a great resolve. I said to him once or twice :

‘ Valazé, how eager you are for such a fine death and how you would be punished, if they did not condemn you ! ’

On the last day, before going up to the Tribunal, he came back to give me a pair of scissors he had on him, saying :

‘ It is a dangerous weapon ; they're afraid we may make attempts on our lives.’

The irony worthy of Socrates with which he uttered the words produced on me an effect which I could not well analyse ; but when I learnt that this modern Cato

had stabbed himself with a dagger which he kept hidden under his cloak, I was not at all surprised and I thought I had guessed his intention : he had concealed the poignard from the searchers, for the prisoners were searched like vile criminals before they went up. Vergniaud threw away some poison he had got and preferred dying with his colleagues.

The two brothers Fonfrède and Ducos detached themselves from this austere picture and inspired a yet more affectionate and lively interest. Their youth, their friendship, Ducos's gaiety, which was unalterable even to the last moment, the graces of his mind and features, made the rage of their foes the more odious. Ducos had sacrificed himself for his brother and had gone to gaol to share his lot. They often used to embrace and derived fresh strength from their embraces. They were quitting everything that could make life dear, an immense fortune, beloved wives, children ; and yet they cast no looks behind but kept their eyes firmly fixed on country and freedom.

On one single occasion Fonfrède took me aside, and, as it were, hiding from his brother, shed a torrent of tears for his wife and children, those causes of the breaking of the most stoical hearts.

His brother notices it and asks :

‘ What is wrong with you ? ’

Fonfrède ashamed of crying and swallowing his tears replies :

‘ It's nothing, he was talking to me——’

And so he cast on me what he thought the shame of a weakness. They embraced and, interlacing their arms, became stronger. Fonfrède stopped his tears which were flowing, his brother stopped his which were ready to flow,



and both of them became again true Romans. The same occurred twenty-four hours before their execution.

They were sentenced to death on the night of 30th October, about 11 p.m. All were condemned ; hopes had in vain been entertained for Ducos and Fonfrède, who perhaps within themselves had not altogether excluded the chance. The signal they had promised us was given. It was in the form of patriotic songs which burst forth simultaneously, and their voices were all united in addressing the last hymns to liberty ; they parodied the Marseillaise like this :

‘Contre nous de la tyrannie,  
Le couteau sanglant est levé,’ *etc.*

The whole of that awful night their songs re-echoed, and when they interrupted them it was to converse together about their fatherland, and occasionally also to enjoy one of Ducos’s sallies.

It was the first time so many extraordinary men were massacred in a body. Youth, beauty, genius, virtue, talents, everything of interest among men, were destroyed at a single blow. If cannibals had representatives they would not perpetrate such an outrage. We were so exalted by their courage that we did not feel the blow till long after it had been struck. We were boldly striding along in the path of persecution, our souls exulting to observe that a fine death was not lacking to such fine lives, and that they were fulfilling worthily of themselves the sole task remaining to them, that of dying well ; but when that courage borrowed from their own had cooled down, then we felt what a loss we had just incurred : despair seized upon us ; weeping, we gazed upon the miserable truckle-bed whence the great Vergniaud had risen to go with bound hands to lay his

head on the scaffold. Valazé, Ducos and Fonfrède were constantly before our eyes. The places they used to occupy became the object of a religious veneration ; and even the aristocracy were respectfully anxious to have pointed out to them the beds on which those great men had lain."

*From the "Mémoires du Comte Beugnot."*<sup>1</sup>

"The infirmary of the Conciergerie was truly the most appalling hospital that ever existed. The building is 25 ft. broad by 100 ft. long, closed at the ends by iron gratings and covered by a high vaulting.<sup>2</sup> It is constructed of hewn stone in long blocks and, besides, as its construction is the heaviest possible in that awful material, you would think it was cut out of a rock. The smoke of the coal and the lamps has given the

<sup>1</sup> Jacques-Claude Beugnot was born at Bar-sur-Aube 25 July, 1762. In 1791 the Aube Department sent him to sit in the Legislative Assembly. His political rôle if it was not brilliant was at least active. He was lavish in speeches, attacks and defences, remaining within the bounds of political Liberalism. The 10th August, which witnessed the overthrow of the monarchy, drove Beugnot from the tribune. His feelings may be measured by that attitude.

In 1793 he was a suspect. Had he not once obtained a decree of accusation against Marat ? So the Committee of Public Safety ordered his arrest in October, 1793. He was confined in the Conciergerie and thence transferred later to the prison of La Force, where the 9th Thermidor restored him to liberty, according to the consecrated formula. Like Riouffe, upon the *coup d'état* of 18 Brumaire, he followed Bonaparte's fortunes. He was successively Prefect of Rouen, Councillor of State for the Interior, Councillor of State to Jérôme, King of Westphalia, Finance Minister to the Grand Duchy of Berg and Cleves, Count of the Empire, Prefect of the Nord Department, Director-General of Police under Louis XVIII at the first Restoration (1814), Naval Minister, Postmaster-General, Minister of State and Deputy.

He died in 1835, after serving with moderate and equal zeal under the Revolution, the Empire and the Restoration. His memoirs about his political and private life only appeared in 1866.

<sup>2</sup> The infirmary finally disappeared with the alterations made in the inside of the Palais de Justice.

stone a sombre hue. Light only comes through two very narrow shaded windows in the centre of the dome, so that nothing more resembles the palaces of hell which you see at the Opéra. The architect probably went there for his models. Between 40 and 50 truckle-beds adorned the two walls of this den, and lying on them in twos and often in threes you might see poor wretches suffering from various illnesses. It was impossible to purify the air there; nobody dreamt either of changing the bed-straw or cleaning the sheets, so that the poor man brought in was at once enveloped in a whirlwind of mephitic corruption.

Such was the corruption that it grew on the flags forming the pavement, and even in the driest weather you could not pass through the infirmary without soiling your footwear. . . . Never were human beings treated in so barbarous, so disgusting a fashion. . . . Many are the hideous pictures I could paint of those unspeakable scenes and sights. If an invalid had just died his head was covered with a part of the bed-covering shared between him and his neighbour, and the latter, certainly the more wretched of the two, would shiver with cold whilst waiting for the corpse to be removed from him. There was a time fixed for the purpose, and besides they could not have gone to the expense of transport for a single dead person: the daily contingent was three or four.

Beyond all these evils there was yet a greater one: a doctor, a savage and barbarous fellow. Never did a comforting word drop from him; never did he show sign of interest in suffering and tortured humanity. His daily visit usually lasted 18 minutes, sometimes 20, 22, and never exceeded 25. I resisted my wrath to make the



calculation and in 22 minutes he had visited 40 patients, which gave a little more than half a minute to each person. His habitual recipe was a poultice, a poultice for everything, and never anything but a poultice. His indifference cancelled at least in this point the results of his ignorance and the sick perhaps gained thereby. The account given of him in the 'Almanach des Prisons' is the most exact truth. It is positively true that more than once, in the same bed, an invalid was substituted for a man who had died the day before, without this Nero Sangrado<sup>1</sup> noticing it, and believing he had still to deal with the latter he found nothing to alter in the treatment and prescribed a continuance of the lotion.

However, the explanation of it all is simple: the doctor was very rich, he had formerly occupied a very important position; he had lived among the lucky ones of the world; from them he had imbibed prejudices, haughtiness and insolence. Such a man was very much out of place in a prison infirmary. Yes, Doctor Thierry, you were a fish out of water there. I know you; you require great people; palaces; gold; cooks; and there you only met with unfortunate wretches.

At the sight of this den of all the horrors and all the pains that can afflict humanity I cursed the good offices of the Citizen Grandpré<sup>2</sup> and regretted my cell. I calculated how many degrees of misery are produced by society, which the average man is born, lives, dies, with-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Sangrado is, of course, one of the most amusing characters in "Gil Blas de Santillane." For all patients, whoever they may be, he has only two remedies which he uses invariably: hot water and bleeding.

<sup>2</sup> He was one of the chief clerks in the Home Office, and as such closely allied with the Rolands. Thanks to his good offices Beugnot was transferred from a cell in the Conciergerie to the Infirmary, a relatively more agreeable abode, if one may use the word for such a place.

out having the merest notion of, and I explained to myself how the philosopher of Geneva<sup>1</sup> had been right in regretting his words, and again how he had met so many talented people who were sincerely determined to think him mad.

I was thus preparing a commentary on Hobbes,<sup>2</sup> when one of my companions in misfortune came up and took me out of my thoughts. This man, who was born in happy circumstances, had kept amid the infirmary surroundings a cool head, originality and even a sort of gaiety. He was an Angevin legist between sixty and seventy years of age. He complimented me on my arrival in the Infirmary, which he was kind enough to call the quietest and most comfortable room in the prison. One may judge of the rest !

‘ You are not ill,’ says my lawyer ; ‘ if you like, let us share table and bed together ; I am clean and a lover of good cheer ; we’ll get on well together.’

I dreaded the intimate company of Henri IV’s Chancellor ; I preferred to pass the night on a bench placed by the stove, between an officer in the merchant service who had made but a single leap from the great Indies to the Conciergerie, and a Paris tailor who hailed from the Rue Mouffetard. Thus was this tyranny, the most powerful and most ghastly which has ever desolated the human race, striking simultaneous blows at opposite ends of the earth whilst destroying everything around it. It crossed those spaces and rushed to the four corners of the world to seize its victims there.

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

<sup>2</sup> The famous English philosopher whose theories are summed up in three points : materialism from the philosophic point of view, egoism in the matter of conduct, and despotism in politics. He lived from 1588 to 1679.

The monstrous plague ! Its birth, its progress, its fall, will for a long time weary human thought.

The marine officer, being more accustomed than others to badly made beds, slept very well on his bench ; the tailor went to sleep whilst telling me that he was in the Conciergerie for having made the sleeves of some hussar uniforms too short, and despite the interestingness of his subject he did not send me off to sleep. So there I was, awake by myself in the Conciergerie infirmary.

I am mistaken : pain kept several poor devils awake on their beds. I felt then the whole depth of Colardeau's verse :

*' Que la nuit paraît longue à la douleur qui veille ! '*

I heard on either side of me plaintive cries, groans. Further away a poor man beset by a dreadful dream was uttering shrieks which chilled me with fright ; I could distinguish quite clearly the words ' blood,' ' executioner,' ' death ' ; such words used to circulate around these funereal beds, and hour by hour the clock, with its laggard sounds, would measure that eternity of suffering. The dogs answered the clock by long howls. And you, who have not spent one night there amid that assemblage of horrors, you have not yet experienced anything, suffered anything on earth.

To increase the torture a staircase leading to I know not what hall of the Palais backs on to the infirmary wall. The staircase must lead to one of the rooms of the tribunes of the Revolutionary Tribunal, because at 5 a.m. all the sick who were able to sleep were woke up with a start by the noise of eager people hustling each other, disputing, fighting for the best places, and this din, which was terrifying for more than one reason, was



renewed every day and prolonged far into the morning. So the first sensation of an invalid upon his awakening was the fear that a fight was going on over his head for the pleasure of devouring his last moments ; for at that time, that is to say in the early days of Brumaire, illness, even agony, no longer saved one from appearing at the Tribunal, and I saw carried there a priest from Autun who was not given more than twelve hours to live and who indeed died at the instant he was thrown into the cart.

In the presence of such profound misery I blushed to have been born a man.<sup>1</sup> Despair had pierced my soul ; my eyes were dry and my blood burning hot. I wandered hurriedly up and down the infirmary, awaiting and at the same time fearing the light which began to penetrate through the bars. Haunted by the pictures of the past night, anxious as to what was awaiting me during the day, if I had then been summoned to my punishment, I should have flown to it in a transport of joy.

I more than once reflected that death on the scaffold only inspires the average man with such horror because he compares it with the state of peace, the enjoyments and maybe the happiness he experiences ; but death, when considered from the inside of a dungeon and, what is worse, from one of the truckle-beds I speak of ; death, when the whole of life is changed into a torment, is no longer the acme of misfortunes, it is the cure of them. The bravery of most of those who died during those latter

<sup>1</sup> There is a curious likeness to be noted between this phrase and that which ends Riouffe's "*Memoires d'un détenu*": "I shall soon succumb beneath so many awful recollections, and I shall die ashamed of having been a man."

times was largely composed of contentment at reaching the end of their sufferings.

. . . . .

I have stated that the infirmary was tainted with an insupportable slavishness of conduct towards some inhabitants of that part of the gaol. I passed them all in review in the morning and recognised a fair number of my comrades. The majority welcomed me with a consoling interest. I promptly left the infirmary owing to their eager attentions and passed into a room called the 'little pharmacy.' This room was destined to receive a famous woman.<sup>1</sup> It had, besides, what the others had not, a double door five inches thick, cased in iron and fitted with three hinge bolts. Of the two windows which once illumined it one was hermetically closed, the other almost entirely so ; but, on the other hand, it was adorned with a paper which multiplied around us the emblems and words 'liberty,' 'equality,' 'rights of man,' 'constitution.' It was impossible to raise one's eyes without meeting the word 'liberty' on a few bars, the word 'equality' on the bolts.

For the rest the room, which was furnished for an uncommon purpose,<sup>2</sup> was then occupied by national representatives. Its inmates were all Deputies, past or present. The trial of the twenty-one was at its finish.<sup>3</sup> A spectacle of more exciting interest caused a prompt diversion in all I had felt, thought, experienced up till then. I had under my eyes a contest of talent, knowledge, everything men are used to cherish and honour, but it was

<sup>1</sup> Mme. Roland.

<sup>2</sup> It had been occupied by Marie-Antoinette.

<sup>3</sup> The trial of the twenty-one Girondins.

a contest of talent, of knowledge, fettered with unworthy irons, against ignorance that had credit, against scoundrelism in action and crime all-powerful."

## V. THE PRINCESS DE LAMBALLE

DURING the night of 18th to 19th August Mme. de Lamballe,<sup>1</sup> who had followed the Royal Family to the Temple prison, was arrested, separated from the Queen and taken through the subterranean ways of the Temple to a carriage, which brought her to the Hôtel-de-Ville.

At three in the morning the Princess appeared before a man with a disfigured face wearing a huge red wig. It was Billand-Varenne. He put her through an interrogatory, and finished by telling her to await a decision of the Commune.

This waiting lasted till the 19th, at noon. Some carriages stopped at the Hôtel-de-Ville, which was beset by an enormous, vociferous mob. The Princess got into one of the fiacres, which drove to the Rue des Ballets. It stopped at the gate of the La Force prison. She got out. It was her last gaol.

The cell she occupied was narrow and damp. She accommodated herself to it with the best grace in the world, being already resigned, since she had seen the Royal captive.

"People work in the gaols of the Republic," is what the wicket-keeper tells the Princess as he brings her some

<sup>1</sup> Marie-Thérèse-Louise de Savoie-Carignan, born 8th September, 1749, married Prince Louis-Alexandre-Stanislas Bourbon de Penhièvre de Lamballe. She was one of the truest friends of Marie-Antoinette, who appointed her superintendent of her house. At the time of Louis XVI's flight to Varennes she had fled to England. When the King was brought back to Paris she returned and followed the Queen till the day the monarchy fell.



soldiers' shirts to sew. She accepts the humiliating task. It was the last she had to perform.

On Sunday, 2nd September, extraordinary excitement filled the prison. The Princess is deprived of her daily walk. The day then goes by, whilst outside there is continually resounding a strange, dull, prolonged din as if Paris had just risen. Night comes, the dawn of day.

At six in the morning armed men penetrate the Princess's cell to ask her her name. She gives it, and they go. In her disquiet the Princess gets on a chair to approach the window and have a look in the street. There is a gigantic crowd there, encircling the gaol. A gun is suddenly raised and levelled at Mme. de Lamballe. She starts back and waits. Eleven o'clock sounds. Men enter who command her to go down. She obeys and asks for a little wine and bread. She goes and has her repast in a corner of the yard. It is filled by an armed, ragged, growling mob.

She finishes her frugal meal beneath their eyes. Some men draw near. Mme. de Lamballe says farewell to Mme. de Touzzel, who has not left her, and follows the gaolers. She walks through a double hedge of howling spectators. They shove her about. She swoons away. When she recovers she finds herself in the doorkeeper Bault's room. Three men in tatters are seated at a table. The rabble is pressing along the walls, the rabble ever wearing a hundred faces of hatred, violence and anger.

"Your name?"

"What do you know of the Court plots?"

"What do you know of 10th August?"

The three questions assail her, grip her in their insidious snares. In vain she struggles. She gradually feels herself being crushed in the fearful vice.

"Swear to equality, liberty, hatred of the King, of the Queen and of Royalty!"

She stiffens in revolt.

"Never!"

"To the Abbaye!" declares the President.

And an exultant roar replies to him. Four bloody arms seize hold of the Princess, drag her on. She falls on her knees. They pull her up again. She crosses the gateway, and a sabre blow cuts the nape of her neck. A mask of sticky purple pours over her face. She advances tottering, her head enveloped in the billowy powdered masses of her loosened hair. She starts back at some corpses lying in the passage; they shove her on, she still marches forward. Wet warm hands support her, then suddenly let her go. Fainting or dead she collapses on a warm heap of motionless bodies. A last sabre cut detaches her head from the trunk. Thus dies Louise de Savoie-Carignan, Princess de Lamballe.

What happens at that tragic moment?

"They cut off her head and breasts," says Sébastien Mercier in his "*Nouveau Tableau de Paris*," "her body is opened, they tear out her heart, her head is then carried at the end of a pike and promenaded through Paris; her body was dragged along at some distance."

It has been asserted<sup>1</sup> that the body had been thrown on a kerbstone in Rue du Roi-de-Sicile and that the ghastly mutilations, mentioned by Mercier, were perpetrated at that spot.

The tale must be discounted a good deal. Since then an official list has been found of the objects found in the Princess's pocket, which thus shows the greater part of

<sup>1</sup> Mortimer-Ternaux, "*Histoire de la Terreur (1792-1794)*, d'après des documents authentiques et des pièces inédites," Vol. III.

the atrocious circumstances of her death to be pure invention. Still there cannot be denied the promenading of the corpse and of the decapitated head to the Temple prison, where Marie-Antoinette swooned on seeing them.

"Some individuals," writes an eye-witness, "were dragging the body by the legs, the back being on the ground ; the head was fixed to the point of the pike."

What became of the head during that awful day ? We do not think much credit need be attached to the legend that it was carried on to the counter of a wine merchant, where the men of the bloody cortège went and drank to its health. The same may be said of the hairdresser alleged to have been forcibly detained in order to adorn, dress and powder the horrible relic.

At seven that very night the head reached the Quinze-Vingts Section, where the objects found on the Princess had already been despatched during the day, consisting of a small gilded book bound in red morocco with the title : "Imitation de J.-C.," a red morocco pocket-book containing 18 national assignats of 5 livres, a gold ring with an inset of movable blue stone containing fair hair tied in "*lacs d'amour*" (pools of love) with a device : "They are whitened by misfortunes,"<sup>1</sup> a bit of English root, a small ivory pencil-holder with a gold pen, a small two-bladed knife with a tortoise-shell handle adorned with silver, an English-steel corkscrew, a small pair of depilatory pincers, a small bit of cardboard covered with indecipherable scribblings, a paper with a list of linen and crockery, two little glass bottles used as writing materials with gold stoppers, holding a few sealing-wafers of various hues, a double-fronted picture showing on one side a flaming thorn-surrounded heart pierced by a dagger

<sup>1</sup> Hair given the Princess by Marie-Antoinette a short time before.



and bearing the legend : " Cor Jesu, salva nos, perimus," and on the other side a flaming heart, a fleur-de-lis and another legend : " Cor Mariæ unitum Cordi Christi " ; a medallion in sky-blue cloth with a flaming heart trans-fixed. The whole lot had been put up for sale.

" The decapitated head was sent back by a man called Pointel, as is proved by the *procès-verbal* recovered and published by M. Taschereau <sup>1</sup> :

" SECTION OF THE 15-20 [*sic*] PERMANENT COMMITTEE.

" The 3rd September, Year IV of liberty and the 1st of equality :

" The citizen Jacques Pointel, of the Halle au Blé, Rue des Petits Champs, No. 69, came to the Committee to ask us to have buried the head of the former Princess de Lamballe, which he had succeeded in getting possession of. We could not but applaud the said citizen's patriotism and humanity, and went at once and had the aforesaid head buried in the cemetery of the Enfants-Trouvés, which is near our Committee and in our section, and we have drawn the present document to serve him as a discharge and to be used in a just and proper way.

" Done in committee, the date being as above.

" DESESQUELLE,

" REVEL,

" Commissary of the 15-20.

" Sous-greffier."

A whole legend created around the mournful relic is thus destroyed.

Mme. Guénard, in her " Mémoires sur la Princesse de Lamballe," related that an officer who claimed to have

<sup>1</sup> " Revue Retrospective ou Bibliothèque historique," Vol. III, 1834, pp. 152, 153.

run great risks in order to get hold of the cut-off head, had carried it to the Lamballe family burial-place at Vernon. The story was long believed, and it needed M. Taschereau's discovery to reduce it to nothingness. "This obscure citizen," says he, "who for his part at least demands neither reward nor gratitude for his respect towards the dead and for his humane and perchance courageous resolve, makes it clear that the officer mentioned above was, to speak mildly, mistaken."

Frankly we may use quite a different term about his statement. Up to 1819 the Restoration celebrated yearly Masses for the Princess's death in the Church of Saint-Leu. Her tragic end, wrapped up in mystery and horror, disfigured by political passions, has come down to us, and though it was a deed of monstrous barbarity the truth began to come to light. That the Princess fell beneath the September hatchet-blows is undeniable, irrefutable, but her death at any rate was not attended by the atrocities sedulously bruited abroad by the Royalists. The body was not robbed, seeing that the official account mentions the things found on her, and her head received the last offices of sepulture, whilst the citizen who saved it from other insults was "praised for his humanity and patriotism."

Still, it is a gloomy picture that rises in the memory—the picture of a head buried by night, in the solitude of a graveyard, where it still sleeps in the bosom of the earth among unknown remains and nameless skeletons.

## VI. MARIE-ANTOINETTE'S LAST HOURS

THE following account has been handed down to us by a lowly young woman, Rosalie Lamorlière, who attended on the Queen during her detention in the Conciergerie. Having been chambermaid to the mother of Beaulieu the comedian, Rosalie was without a place at her death. Thanks to her mistress's son, she found employment with the concierge Richard at the Conciergerie. Her occupation as a servant brought her in contact with Marie-Antoinette.

She was present at her arrival at the prison on 2nd August, and was still at the prison on 15th October, 1793, when the Queen left her room of confinement to go up to the hall of the Revolutionary Tribunal, where the jury unanimously condemned her to death. It is on the morning of that day that we take up the story of the humble domestic whose name is henceforth bound up with the captivity of the Queen of France.

. . . . .

"At last came the awful day of 15th October; the Queen went up at 8 a.m. into the hall of audiences to receive sentence, and as I do not remember having taken her that day any kind of nourishment, I suppose they made her go fasting.

In the morning I heard some people talking about the hearing of the case. They said: 'Marie-Antoinette will get off; she answered like an angel; they will only have her deported.'

Towards 4 p.m. the door-keeper said to me:

'The meeting is suspended for three-quarters of an



hour, the accused is not to come down ; go up quick, she is asking for a bouillon.'

I immediately took an excellent broth which I kept in reserve on my stove and went up to the Princess. As I was approaching near a hall close to her one of the police commissaires named Labuzière, a short, stumpy fellow, snatched the soup-basin from my hands, and, handing it to a young woman who was excessively got up, said to me :

' This young woman is very eager to see Widow Capet<sup>1</sup>; it's a delightful opportunity for her.'

And the woman at once went off carrying the soup, which was half spilt.

It was no use my begging and entreating Labuzière, he was all-powerful ; I had to obey. What must the Queen have thought at receiving the basin of soup from the hands of a person she did not know ?

A few minutes past four on the morning of 16th October they came to tell us the Queen of France was condemned !—I felt as if a sword had stabbed my heart, and I went and wept in my room, stifling my cries and sobs. The concierge was grieved to hear the news, but he was more accustomed to such things than I ; he pretended to take no interest in it.

About 7 a.m. he ordered me to go down to the Queen and ask her if she wanted any nourishment. On entering the room, in which two lights were burning, I saw a gendarmerie officer sitting in the left corner, and approaching Madame, I saw her all dressed in black lying on the bed.

With her face turned to the window, she leant her head on her hand.

<sup>1</sup> The Convention having suppressed the title of " King," the King and Royal Family were thenceforth designated by the name of " Capet."

## 64 BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TERROR

'Madame,' I said, trembling, 'you took nothing last night, and almost nothing during the day. What do you wish for this morning?'

The Queen shed floods of tears. She answered:

'My girl, I don't want anything any more; it's all ended with me.'

I took the liberty of adding:

'Madame, I have kept on my stoves a bouillon and a vermicelli; you have need of something to keep you up; allow me to bring you something.'

The Queen's tears redoubled, and she said:

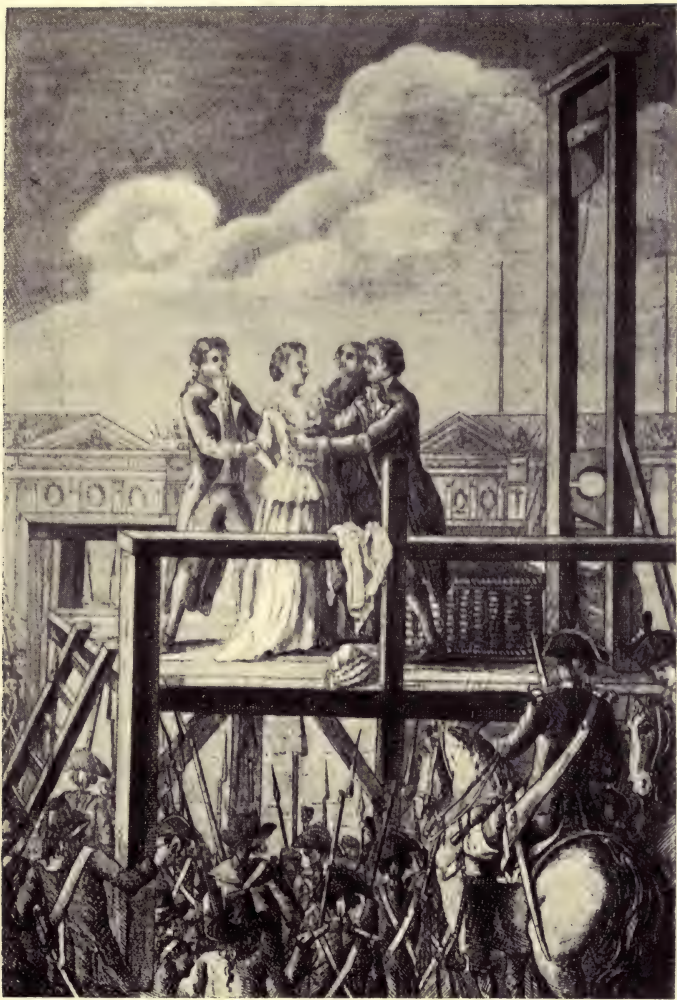
'Rosalie, bring me some soup.'

I went for it; she took a seat, and could swallow only a few spoonfuls; I call God to witness her body received no other food. A little before the day fixed upon, an ecclesiastic authorised by the Government<sup>1</sup> presented himself to the Queen, and offered to hear her in confession. Her Majesty, learning from him that he was one of the practising Paris curés, understood he had taken the oath<sup>2</sup> and refused his offices. The incident was talked about in the house.

When daylight had come, that is to say about 8 a.m., I returned to Madame to help her dress, as she had suggested when she took the small amount of bouillon on her bed. Her Majesty went into the little space I usually left between the feather bed and the wall. She herself unfolded a chemise which had been brought her, probably in my absence, and having signed to me to remain in front of the bed so as to keep the sight of her body from the gendarme, she stooped down and doffed her dress, in

<sup>1</sup> A man called Girard, vicar of the parish of Saint-Landry. "*Le Glaive vengeur de la République Française*," in its account of the execution, writes his name: "Genet." This is certainly an error.

<sup>2</sup> Oath of fidelity to the Republic.



THE EXECUTION OF MARIE-ANTOINETTE

From a contemporary print





order to change linen for the last time. The gendarmerie officer at once drew near, and, stopping by the foot of the bed, watched the Princess change. Her Majesty immediately put back the fichu on her shoulders, and observed to the young man with great gentleness :

‘ In the name of decency, sir, permit me to change my linen without a witness.’

‘ I could not agree to it,’ was the gendarme’s rough reply ; ‘ my orders are that I must have my eye on all your movements.’

The Queen sighed, put on her last chemise with all possible precautions and all possible modesty, took for her outer garb, not the long mourning dress which she still wore in the presence of her judges, but the white déshabillé which served ordinarily as a morning costume, and unfolding her large muslin fichu, she crossed it under the chin. The worry caused me by the gendarme’s brutality prevented me from noticing whether the princess still had the medallion of M. le Dauphin ;<sup>1</sup> but it was easy for me to see that she carefully rolled up her poor chemise ; she wrapped it in one of her sleeves as if in a sheath, and then pressed this linen into a space she perceived between the canvas-paper and the wall.

The day before, knowing she was about to appear before the public and the judges, she had arranged her hair rather high from a feeling of decorum. She had added to her linen cap, which was bordered with small ornamental folds, the two streamers which she kept in a cardboard box ; and under these mourning streamers she had neatly

<sup>1</sup> A medallion of her son, Louis XVII, who, imprisoned in the Temple, was destined miraculously to escape from it and to reappear long years later under the name of Naundorff, in order to reclaim the rights which the politics of the Government in power always found a way to deny him.

adjusted a black crape, which gave her a pretty widow's head-dress. On her way to death she kept only the simple linen cap, without streamers or marks of mourning ; but having only one pair of chausses, she kept on her black stockings and her kid shoes, which she had not put out of shape or spoilt at all during the seventy-six days she was with us.

I left her without returning to bid her good-bye or even to make her a single curtsey for fear of compromising and distressing her. I went and cried in my room and prayed to God for her.

When she had left that fearful establishment the first usher of the Tribunal, accompanied by three or four persons in his own employ, came and asked the concierge for me, and ordered me to follow him to the Queen's late room. He let me take back my looking-glass and the cardboard box. As for the other objects which had belonged to her Majesty, he commanded me to wrap them up in a bed-sheet. They made me sweep up even a bit of straw which happened, I do not know how, to be on the floor of the room, and they took away with them these wretched remains of the best and most unhappy princess that ever lived."

. . . . .

Rosalie Lamorlière's story tells us that at a few minutes past four the sentence against the Queen was delivered by the Revolutionary Tribunal. The Queen at once left the hall and went down into her cell, where she wrote the letter given below.

The story of the letter is curious. It was not sent to Mme. Elisabeth, Louis XVI's sister, who was herself guillotined 21 Floréal, Year II (10th May, 1794), and to



whom it was addressed. The prison concierge handed it to Fouquier-Tinville, the Public Prosecutor to the Revolutionary Tribunal. He sent it on to Robespierre, who kept it, and among whose papers it was found at his death. Courtois, the Representative of the Aube Department in the Convention, who was entrusted with the inventory of Robespierre's papers, took the letter and kept it. Its whereabouts was unknown till the end of the Empire.

Upon Napoleon's fall and the return of the Bourbon, Courtois, who was obliged to quit French soil for having voted for Louis XVI's death, hoped to return to favour by delivering up the precious document. He did not, however, succeed, and the letter, restored to Louis XVIII, was read at a solemn meeting of the Chamber of Deputies. Let me add that Louis XVIII had the Queen's dungeon in the Conciergerie changed into a chapel, and had disinterred from the Madeleine cemetery, where they had been buried, the remains of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette in order to deposit them in the vaults of the basilica of Saint-Denis.

This last letter of Marie-Antoinette's figures to-day in the Museum of the National Archives.

. . . . .

“ The 16 8ber, 4h. 1/2 in the morning.

“ It is to you, my sister, that I write for the last time ; I have just been condemned, not to a shameful death, it is only so for criminals, but to go and rejoin your brother. Innocent as he was, I hope to display the same firmness as he did in those last moments. I am calm, as one is when conscience does not reproach one with anything ; I am deeply sorry to leave my poor children ; you know I only lived for them, and you. My good and tender sister, you

who through your friendship have sacrificed everything to be with us, in what a position do I leave you !

“ I learnt from the speeches themselves in the trial that my daughter was separated from you. Alas ! the poor child, I do not dare to write to her, she would not get my letter. I do not even know if this will reach you ; receive here my blessing for those two. I hope, one day, when they are older, they will be able to live with you, and enjoy wholly your affectionate care.

“ Let both of them think of what I have not ceased inculcating in them : that principles and the exact performance of their duties are the first basis of life ; that their mutual friendship and trust will make their happiness ; that my daughter should feel that at her present age she ought always to help her brother with the advice which *her* (this word is erased in the original) greater experience and her friendship may inspire in her ; that my son in turn may render his sister all the attentions, the services, which friendship may inspire ; that finally they should both feel that in whatever position they may be, they will only be truly happy in their union, and that they should take example from us : how in our misfortunes our friendship consoled us and in happiness one enjoys doubly when one can share it with a friend ; and where find one more affectionate, one dearer than in one's own family ? Let my son never forget his father's last words which I emphatically repeat to him : let him never try to revenge our deaths.

“ I have to speak to you of a matter very distressing to my heart. I know how much trouble this child must have given you ; forgive him, my dear sister ; think of the age he is and how easy it is to make a child say what one wants, and even what he does not compre-

hend;<sup>1</sup> a day will come, I hope, when he will only feel all the more the whole value of your kindnesses and of your tenderness for both of them.

"It remains still for me to confide to you my last thoughts. I should have liked to write them at the beginning of the trial; but besides that I was not allowed to write, the proceedings have been so rapid that I should not really have had the time. I die in the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion, in that in which I was brought up, and which I have ever professed, having no spiritual consolation to expect, not knowing if there still exists here anyone of that religion, and indeed the place where I am would expose them to too much danger if they once entered it.

"I sincerely ask God to forgive me all the faults I may have committed during my life. I hope that, in His goodness, He will kindly receive my last prayers, as well as those I have been a long time offering up, so that He deign to receive my soul in His pity and His goodness. I ask forgiveness of all those I know, and of you, my sister, in particular, for all the pain which, without wishing it, I may have caused you. I forgive all my enemies the evil they have done me.

"I here say good-bye to my aunts *and* (this last word is erased) to all my brothers and sisters. I had some friends; the idea of being separated from them for ever and their distress are among the greatest sorrows which I take with me in dying; let them know at least that, up

<sup>1</sup> We know that Hébert, the editor of "Père Duchesne," had accused the Queen and Mme. Elisabeth of having had incestuous relations with him who was to be Louis XVII. He had even made the child sign a declaration to that effect. Robespierre vigorously blamed the charge, which was only incidentally raised during the trial and which the Tribunal did not uphold.



## 70 BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TERROR

to my last moment, I thought of them. Farewell, my good and loving sister. May this letter reach you! Think always of me. I embrace you with all my heart, as well as those poor, dear children; my God! how heart-rending it is to leave them for ever! Good-bye, good-bye! I am going now only to occupy myself with my spiritual duties. As I am not free in my actions, they will perhaps bring me a priest, but I here protest that I shall not speak one word to him, and that I shall treat him as an absolutely strange person.

“MARIE-ANTOINETTE.”

## VII. THE LAST NIGHT OF FOUQUIER-TINVILLE

ON the evening of 17th Floréal sixteen accused persons descended from the hall of the Revolutionary Tribunal into the cells of the Conciergerie.

They were: Etienne Foucault, former cultivator and farmer; Gabriel-Toussaint Scellier, lawyer; François-Pierre Garnier-Launay; Pierre-Nicolas Leroy, alias Dix-Août, former Marquis de Montflabert; Léopold Renaudin; Joachim Vilate, ex-professor; Jean-Louis Prieur, historical painter; Claude-Louis Châtelet; François Gérard, jeweller; Boyenval, ex-officer; Pierre-Guil-launie Benoît, Commissary of the Executive Council; Marie-Emmanuel-Joseph Lanne, Assistant in the Revolutionary Tribunal; Joseph Verney, ex-turnkey of the Luxembourg prison, door-keeper of the Saint-Lazare prison; François Dupaumier, police administrator, director of the Bicêtre; Armand-Martial-Joseph Herman, formerly President of the Revolutionary Tribunal, Commissary of the civil administrations, the police and

tribunals ; and Antoine - Quentin Fouquier-Tinville, ex-Public Prosecutor.

The first three had been judges in the Revolutionary Tribunal ; the next six, jurymen.

After forty-five days' trial they had been condemned to death. The execution was fixed for the next day, 18th Floréal.<sup>1</sup> The day after Robespierre's fall, 9th Thermidor, all those who had been his friends, who had served him, had become suspects. A decree was passed for the transformation of the Tribunal and the prosecution of all those who, whether as judges or jurymen, had made themselves conspicuous there by their Revolutionary zeal. At their head was the Public Prosecutor.

. . . . .

So he had fallen, that Fouquier, the " red " man, the hatchet of the Convention ! He had fallen amid an upheaval ; he, the Public Prosecutor, had become the Prosecuted. After having so many times requisitioned the application of the law against accused persons, it had been requisitioned against him. And the law had struck him.

On 14th Thermidor he was standing at the refreshment-bar of the Tribunal when a man, running up breathlessly, stopped to inform him that the Convention had just decreed his accusation. It was the Conventional Fréron, the Deputy for Paris, who had mounted the tribune in order to demand that " Fouquier should go and store up in hell the blood he had shed." To which the Convention had agreed.

<sup>1</sup> The order for the execution of Fouquier-Tinville and the members of the Revolutionary Tribunal formed part of a sale of autographs at the Hôtel Drouot on 16th May, 1908. The document was bought by an unknown amateur for 2200 francs.

The news left Fouquier-Tinville tolerably indifferent.

"I am innocent," was his reply to the bearer of the ill news; "I only acted by order of the Committees of the Government."

He took up his hat and went away.

Where was he going? Was he running away whilst there was still time? He could easily have done so. He did not do so. He went to the Convention. There the news of the decree affecting him was confirmed, and he was put under arrest. Nevertheless there was nobody to detain him. He departed and returned to the Conciergerie. The man who had signed so many orders of incarceration went up to the head turnkey of the prison and said quietly:

"Lock me up."

He surrendered himself a prisoner.

He was afterwards transferred to the Du Plessis College, which had become the Prison de l'Egalité. We may read in a newspaper of that date:

"The former Public Prosecutor, Fouquier-Tinville, who was some time ago transferred to the Egalité prison, formerly the Collège du Plessis, is obliged for safety never to open his door or his windows; on 23rd of this month he asked permission to take the air in the courtyard, but the cries of the prisoners inspired him with the fear of being torn to pieces. Next day he wanted to open his window; the yelling of curses compelled him to close it immediately."<sup>1</sup>

Then came the interrogatories, the transfer to the Conciergerie, his busy drawing-up of a justificatory document, and finally the trial. We have observed how it ended.

<sup>1</sup> "La Vedette ou Gazette du Jour," 3rd Frimaire, Year III, p. 1.



So Fouquier is lodged there in his cell on that last night. He thinks of his past, the days of his power, the days of the formidable toil he achieved. He also thinks of his childhood down in the damp Artois, at Hérouel, where he was born on 12th June, 1746. His father was a rough peasant, whose mania was the tilling of the soil, and who had acquired some property by persistent hard work.

The first of his four sons had added to his name that of the estate of Hérouel—he was Fouquier d'Hérouel; the second, after first assuming the name of the property of Forest, had chosen that of Tinville—he was Fouquier de Tinville; the third voted for the Vauvillers estate—he was Fouquier de Vauvillers; the fourth was Fouquier de Forest. The second son alone was destined to be recorded in history.

This rough peasant's child had made profound and successful studies of law. He then resolved to enter M. Berthereau's office as chief clerk. When he left on 26th January, 1774, he bought M. Cornillier's post as "procureur postulant" at the Châtelet and his "presidial" seat for Paris.

The following year, in October, he married one of his cousins, Geneviève-Dorothée Saugnier, who, on 17th July, 1776, bore him a son, Pierre-Quentin; on 3rd January, 1778, a daughter, Geneviève-Louise Sophie; on 7th December in the same year another daughter, Marie Adélaïde; one more daughter on 20th January, 1782, Aglaé-Joséphine. He then used to be up to his ears in work, but luck was doubtless adverse shortly after his wife's death, which happened 23rd April, 1782, for in 1783 he sold his post as "procurator" to M. Bligny.

Afterwards he often changed his address. In 1785

he was living in the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Antoine ; in 1786, Rue Vieille-du-Temple ; in 1788, Rue Sainte-Croix-de-la-Bretonnerie ; in 1789, Rue Bourg-Tibourg ; in 1791, Rue de Chartres ; in 1792, Rue Saint-Honoré. He had married again, four months after his first wife's death, Jeanne-Henriette Gérard d'Aucourt. In March, 1793, he was appointed Public Prosecutor to the Revolutionary Tribunal, which, on Danton's proposal, had just instituted on the 10th of the same month the National Convention.

That is what Fouquier is thinking about on the evening before his death. He reflects that he brought to his terrible task the self-sacrifice the Republic expected of him. In order to satisfy it he slept only four hours a night, always going to bed late and rising before dawn. There he was, in his cabinet, in one of the big Conciergerie towers, which have remained standing even until to-day, sending off a batch of letters which amounted to no less than sixty to eighty per day, as he himself declared during the trial. The meetings of the Tribunal, which were held a few yards from there, often began at 9 or 10 a.m. He attended them, covered with a black cloak, wearing a hat à la Henri IV adorned with black plumes, whilst his medal as Public Prosecutor hung round his neck. In harsh, serious tones he used to claim the assistance of the law. It was his rôle, it was his duty. That is why he was called a murderer and a drinker of blood.

At that period he used to receive petitions from all quarters, imploring his aid or his intervention. From those that have been preserved, we reproduce three of the most remarkable.

*" To the citizen Fouquier,  
Public Prosecutor at the Revolutionary  
Tribunal, in his office.*

*" Conciergerie, death-hall, 24 Pluviôse, the year  
2 of the Republic one and indivisible.*

" CITIZEN ACCUSER,

" Although I was imprudent, although I had held conversations and had even written letters which I would have done better to keep to myself, nevertheless I did not expect to be treated as rigorously as I was by your Tribunal, the Equality Section of it.<sup>1</sup> I make no observations about it, but I remark to you that I am leaving behind me the cardboard model of a quite new aerostat which should possess the advantage of steering. I should like to give the Revolutionary Committee of my Section, or at least two of its Members, the *explanation of the theory according to which it is constructed*. I would then offer it to my Section, if it seemed worthy of it. Less than two hours would suffice, and I should die all the same within the 24 hours as the order stands.

" That, Citizen Accuser, is what I am so free as to propose to you. Get this note passed on to the Committee of Public Safety, if you consider it necessary, and receive its authorisation. I am resigned, I shall die resigned, I am not trying to prolong my life uselessly, but I avow I am still thinking what can be done to keep me in the public memory when the season of anger has gone by.

<sup>1</sup> The Revolutionary Tribunal was divided into two Sections. The first sat in Liberty Hall, the second in Equality Hall. The former is to-day the First Chamber of the Civil Tribunal of the Seine; the latter was burnt down under the Commune.



## 76 BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TERROR

" I respectfully greet you. There is, alas ! no more fraternity.

" MILLIN-LABROSSE.

" P.S.—The Citizen Harnoy knows my aerostat, and I appeal to his conscience, although he has reason to complain of me. I have no other paper."<sup>1</sup>

Among all those letters over which spreads the dark shadow of death there is none more poignant than that of the Princess of Monaco, who was sentenced to death on 8 Thermidor. In order to gain a day—you will see why—she declared herself enceinte, which procured her a reprieve, in case the declaration was true. The Princess was transferred to the Evêché prison, and thence she addressed the two following notes to Fouquier-Tinville :

" CITIZEN,

" I beg to inform you that I am not enceinte. I wanted to tell you myself ; no longer expecting you will come, I let you know it. I did not soil my mouth with this lie through fear of death or to escape it, but to give myself a day extra, in order to cut off my hair, and not to give it into the executioner's hands. It is the only legacy I can bequeath to my children ; it must at least be pure.

" CHOISEUL-STAINVILLE-JOSÈPHE GRIMALDI-MONACO,

*" A foreign princess, and dying through  
the injustice of the French judges."*

The princess had cut her hair off with a bit of glass, and having wrapped it up in a letter for her children, she

<sup>1</sup> The letter is written on a small soiled scrap of paper, bearing marks of another writing, half-effaced.

addressed the packet to Fouquier-Tinville with this second note—the last she wrote :

“ CITIZEN,

“ I ask you in the name of humanity to have this packet remitted to my children ; to my mind you had a humane look, and on seeing you I was sorry you were not my judge ; if you had been, I should not perhaps have burdened you with my last wish. Have regard to the request of an unhappy mother who is dying at the age of happiness, and who leaves children deprived of their only resource ; let them at least get this last proof of my tenderness, and I shall indeed be grateful to you.”<sup>1</sup>

That was yesterday ! but to-day !——

To-day Fouquier is a condemned man, hounded down by everybody. He is the scapegoat sacrificed by the Thermidor reaction against the Terror. He does not hide it from himself ; he writes to his wife that his anxiety is caused by “ being sacrificed and not being judged.” His trial justified the anxiety, and the 18th Floréal proved it.

That is what the condemned man is dreaming about in the shades of night. Perhaps he weeps over the memory of the gentle, sad woman, who is to become a widow next day, and whom he leaves by herself with twins. They were born to him in Germinal, 1793, in his abode at the Conciërgerie. They have now taken refuge with their mother in a small, gloomy, narrow apartment in the Rue de la Harpe. Her husband's farewell letters reach her there, poor woman. Some days before his death, Fouquier wrote to her :

“ I confess to you that your letter [is] the only comfort

<sup>1</sup> Emile Campardon, “ Le Tribunal Révolutionnaire de Paris,” Paris, 1866, Vol. I, p. 411.

## 78 BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TERROR

I experience. I shall redouble my efforts to endure the overwhelming weight under which I am groaning. But, deprived of all news, seeing no newspapers, there is nothing astonishing in my yielding to grief, especially when I see myself attacked by the blackest calumny without having the opportunity of replying to it. I know I am innocent, and no bad action can be brought up against me with the least appearance of truth, but a man left to himself as I am loses at intervals a great deal of his energy and his courage."<sup>1</sup>

A few days before his trial he wrote to her again :

*" From the house of arrest du Plessis, otherwise  
l' Egalité, the twenty-second Brumaire of the Year  
III of the Republic one and indivisible.*

" Although I have not been interrogated, I have to expect, my good friend, to be soon brought up for judgment ; at a different time, strong in my innocence, I should not have had in any way to fear the approach of that judgment ; but under the distressing circumstances in which we are living, and after the horrible diatribes, calumnies and outcries of every kind which have been heaped on my head since my detention, it is useless indulging in illusion. All those appalling yells and odious epithets showered on me as an execrable villain, a conspirator and a tiger thirsting for blood, though they are not supported by any facts, are the prelude to my sentence. They are the tactics of the liberticide faction in order to destroy me the more surely.

" So I expect to be sacrificed to the public opinion raised and excited against me by all kinds of methods,

<sup>1</sup> " Catalogue d'autographes N. Charavay," May, 1908, No. 56.



and not to be judged. It is an inevitable rôle on which I have long been calculating and which I have always desired to keep silent about in order to spare you as long as possible the blow which this event may give you. I shall die accordingly for having served my country with too much zeal and activity and for having conformed to the wishes of the Government, with pure hands and heart.

“ But, my good friend, what is going to become of you, you and my poor children ? You are about to be plunged in the horrors of the most frightful poverty ; it will at least be a speaking proof that I have served my country with the disinterestedness of a true Republican ; indeed, what will become of you, of you all ? There are the ugly ideas that beset and torment me day and night ! So I was born to misfortune ; what a fearful thought ! To die as a conspirator, I who never stopped warring against them. There is the reward of my patriotic zeal.

“ Shining through all these deadly events there comes to me yet a beam of gratification, or rather of comfort, namely, the knowledge that you are convinced of my innocence ; at any rate this conviction gives me hope that you will not fail to repeat to our children that their father died an unfortunate death, but innocent, that he ever had your trust and respect ; I advise you not to give way to distress and to control your health for your own benefit and that of our poor children.

“ Forget the little differences we may have had ; they have been the effect of my warm temper, my heart was not touched at all, and it has never been otherwise than attached to you, you may be quite sure, even as I know yours has never been otherwise than attached to me. Alas ! my good friend, who would ever have said I should

have such an end—I who have never known intrigue and have never been tormented by the thirst for riches ?

“ It is hard, my good friend, to communicate to you such sinister ideas. I have pondered it much, but, reflecting that when once sentenced it would not be possible for me to do so, I am determined to transmit to you my last sentiments towards you and my thanks for all the trouble you have been at since my detention ; I repeat, don't let yourself be overcome by grief and I press it upon you not to reject the chances which may procure you a happier lot ; with tears in my eyes and a breaking heart I say good-bye to you for the last time, to your aunt and my poor children, I kiss you a thousand times : alas ! what a sweet gratification should I not feel if I could see you again and press you in my arms ? But, my good friend, it is all up with me, I must think of it no more ! Farewell, a thousand times farewell, both to the few friends remaining to us and especially to the good friend *par excellence* ; kiss heartily my children and your aunt for me ; be a mother to my children, whom I exhort to wisdom and to listen to you ; farewell, farewell.

“ Your faithful friend.

“ The sole gage of my friendship which is in my power, is a little hair which I pray you keep.”

Ah ! if he could have foreseen his widow's fatal and melancholy doom !

“ She lost all her children one by one,” writes M. Dide, “ and dragged on a miserable existence (living on friends' help and on alms) until 1827. She died on 17th November of that year, leaving behind her a few wretched articles of furniture, a reliquary and her husband's letters.

M. Walferdin bought them at the public sale which took place on 29th March, 1828. The sale produced 322 francs 20 centimes."<sup>1</sup>

But who can foresee destiny? Fouquier accepts that which is imposed upon him. He thinks only of its cruelty during the night of agony. Round about him slumbers the prison, the prison in which the other condemned men are watching like himself for the pale dawn at the bars of the ventilator. He reflects that he has been the master of this prison, that he has governed there like a sovereign, as the representative of the awful powers of the Terror. Everything he did he did on orders that came from his superiors. That is his crime, and the crime was his duty.

Thus does Fouquier-Tinville judge himself on his last night, and passes in review his memories of former days. And meanwhile the dawn is rising.

The gaol becomes animated; the gates open; the keys creak in the rust of the locks; the dogs of the wicket-keepers bark. It is morning. It is life; but it is also death. Outside on the quays before the Palace of Justice the crowd begins to gather. It is soon impossible to move about, and the enormous mob gives vent to insults, groans, cries of death, whose echo pierces to the haggard, pale, fainting wife of Fouquier-Tinville in her room in the Rue de la Harpe.

Sanson's tumbrels arrive about ten. They stand in the Cour de Mai, guarded by an escort of gendarmes. The executioner goes inside the wicket, signs the gaol-delivery of the condemned men. It is the time for the execution "toilette." They are there, poor wretches, in a low hall, sitting on wooden benches along the walls.

<sup>1</sup> Auguste Dide, "Hérétiques et Révolutionnaires," Paris, 1887, p. 276.



Fouquier-Tinville is mute, stern, impassive. The night before on leaving the Tribunal his only exclamation was :

“ I bequeath to the people my wife and my children ! ”

And the people answered by hooting him.

The doomed man is now silent, contemptuous, disdainful of everything. His hair is cut by Sanson's scissors. His hands are tied behind his back. The hour sounds. They must be off.

The mournful procession starts, leaves the entrance and mounts the cars. A gigantic outcry mingled with innumerable insults rends the sky. The spectators jostle, crush each other, howl, shake their fists at Fouquier. “ Their accusing voices,” says a contemporary, “ were so many arrows which pierced his bared breast at one and the same time.”<sup>1</sup>

He did not turn a hair, and leaned against the side of the cart, gazing at the shouting rabble in silence.

“ This execution will be carried out in the Place de Grève,” states the order to the carpenter of the Domaine, who is entrusted with the erection of the guillotine. The Place de Grève was at that time very small, says Michelet. The procession slowly reached it. The crowd there was past counting. There was no cessation of the cries. Some of the condemned replied, abusing their insulters. Fouquier alone did not answer. He knew himself for a victim, and had accepted his doom. The fifteen condemned were guillotined before him. He was the last to mount the platform of death. His head fell. Sanson, taking it up by the hair, exhibited it at the four corners of the scaffold. It was insulted for the last time. The executioner then threw it into the basket. It was eleven o'clock.

<sup>1</sup> “ Paris pendant la Révolution,” Vol. II, p. 129.

VIII. LIFE IN THE LUXEMBOURG <sup>1</sup>

*From the "Essais historiques sur les Causes et les Effets de la Révolution," by C. F. Beaulieu.*

"THERE were two men of high distinction imprisoned in the Luxembourg: the Marquis de la Roche-Dumaine and the Duke de Gesvres, a small person with a grotesque face, who knew neither how to walk nor how to speak. The Marquis de la Roche-Dumaine was an attractive man, full of wit, of gaiety, determined to brave the death which he knew was waiting for him. He had a large fortune, charming children; in fact he possessed everything that can attach a man to life. The Duke de Gesvres on the contrary was next door to an idiot and the butt of all about him. M. de la Roche-Dumaine used to spend his time in prison in chaffing the wretched little duke—he borrowed even his manner of speaking:

'It's all very fine for you to play the *patliot*, my poor little Gesvres,' he would say to him, 'you will be *dillotined*.'

'That's not true,' the latter would reply; 'I'm not an *aristoclat*, I spent 900 *flancs* in celebrating the death of the *tylant* [the King]; my *tommune* will come and ask for me back; I'll be set free.'

'Go along with you, you little rascal, you'll have to go through with it, I tell you'; and he would pass his hand over his cheeks, then he would tell him a thousand dubious stories about all the tricks the Duchess de Gesvres had played him; he used to make him the fable and the amusement of the prison.

<sup>1</sup> The Luxembourg palace had been converted into a prison.

The Marquis de la Roche showed heroic courage at the scaffold, and the paralytic duke was one of those who displayed the greatest weakness and the most regret at leaving life.

Meanwhile the Luxembourg was becoming peopled. Every day could be seen arriving legions of Paris citizens, torn from their business and their family ; they were dragged through the streets, they were depicted to the people in the blackest colours, and the fate of the majority of the unhappy victims was a matter either of revenge or of scoundrelism. They heard echoing about them deadly shouts of : " To the guillotine ! " and reached the Luxembourg half-dead, where they were quite amazed at meeting with a humane and sympathetic concierge, who attended to their wants and tried to guess where he could place them so that they might be at their best advantage. Each arrival was usually led to the room of his co-sectionaries. He would find there companions, friends and brothers. They used to live together in the closest union : each in turn swept the room, went for water, did the cooking. Expenses were all shared together, and each paid his share, which, all included, did not exceed forty sous a day.

If a citizen was too poor to provide for his subsistence the good door-keeper almost always would anticipate a request which might not humiliate him, and would charge the expense upon one of the ' aristos.'

A rather funny fact was that these gentlemen used to estimate their respective fortunes in the house by the number of sansculottes they fed, just as they once did in society by the number of their horses, their mistresses, their dogs and their lackeys. In general, the nobility



formed a band apart ; it was not often on familiar terms with the citizens of the Paris sections. The Rues de l'Université, de Grenelle, Saint-Dominique, which were largely represented in the Luxembourg, kept up the strictest etiquette ; they addressed each other as ' M. le prince, M. le duc, M. le comte, M. le marquis.' They put on grave drawing-room manners, and discussed methodically about precedence and visits.

The Republicans amused themselves over these absurd grimaces, scoffed at their prejudices, but did not add insult to the misfortunes of their detention."

## IX. THE END OF THE DANTONISTS

WHEN the Gironde fell, it was followed almost immediately by a new schism in the Convention. Around Danton were arrayed those whom the Revolutionary excesses began to weary and affright. Around Robespierre were grouped those who wanted to strengthen the Jacobin régime by all measures, even extreme ones. The struggle between the parties was short, and the Mountain was yet again triumphant. During the night of 10 to 11 Germinal (30-31 March, 1794), Danton and Camille Desmoulins were arrested by order of the Combined Committees of General Security and Public Safety. Others of their colleagues shared their fate : Delacroix, Héroult de Séchelles, Philippeaux, Fabre d'Eglantine. They were imprisoned in the Luxembourg, and transferred thence to the Conciergerie in order to appear before the Revolutionary Tribunal, which condemned them to death on 16 Germinal. The sentence was carried out the same day in the Place de la Révolution, formerly the Place Louis XV.

This account of the Dantonists in the two prisons is taken from three of the most valuable volumes of prison memoirs : C. F. Beaulieu's " Essais historiques sur les Causes et les Effets de la Révolution de France," the " Almanach des Prisons," and Riouffe's " Mémoires d'un détenu." To these is added Camille Desmoulin's most pathetic letter to his wife, written four days before his execution.

" When Danton arrived with Lacroix<sup>1</sup> at the Luxembourg he seemed to have taken up his rôle with firmness. I was at the prison gate when he came in ; he introduced himself very well.

' Gentlemen,' he said, ' I reckoned upon soon being able to set you free from this place ; but unhappily, lo and behold ! I am shut up as well as you. I don't know any more what will be the end of all this.'

Lacroix said nothing ; they were shut up in two neighbouring but separate rooms ; they spoke to one another out of the window, and entertained themselves with the grimaces they would have to make when the ' national razor ' (that was their phrase for the instrument of punishment) cut their jugulars.

Camille Desmoulins, whose journal in favour of the detained had caused his previous behaviour to be forgiven,<sup>2</sup> was also confined in the Luxembourg. He was quite gloomy, contrary to his usual mood. His wife was

<sup>1</sup> Before the Revolution Lacroix was an advocate at Anet, near Dreux. He voted for Louis XVI's death and accompanied Danton in his missions to the French armies in Belgium. He was guillotined on 16 Germinal.

<sup>2</sup> The *Vieux Cordelier*, which Desmoulins had begun editing and in which he appealed to the clemency of the Government in favour of certain suspects. He was arrested just when he was correcting the proofs of No. 7.

a very pretty person, who always kept roaming in the Luxembourg garden during the whole time her husband was there ; his eyes were constantly fixed on her, and he appeared to regret her a great deal. Some barbarians made a conspiratress out of the innocent creature, and got her assassinated.<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, we still had as fellow-boarders M. Hérault de Séchelles,<sup>2</sup> and a Savoyard priest, Simon by name, both Conventional Deputies, whose demagogic principles did not enable them to find favour with Robespierre. M. de Séchelles did not visit anyone in the prison, he remained always by himself, although he was at liberty to roam over the house ; a privilege not possessed by his colleagues. His only company was that of his valet, who was arrested with him.

One might have imagined that during his detention his mother had herself been imprisoned in the garden of the Luxembourg. She could be seen there from morning to night, with a veil over her eyes, sitting opposite the window of the room occupied by her son, lifting up her eyes now and then, and almost always motionless. I never once cast a glance at the garden—which I was continually doing—without perceiving Mme. Hérault. It is hard to conceive such constancy ; it was not shared by her son. Whilst the mother was thus engaged in

<sup>1</sup> Lucile Desmoulins was arrested shortly after her husband, sentenced to death and executed on 24 Germinal, Year II (13th April, 1794).

<sup>2</sup> One of the handsome men and dandies of the Terror. Before 1789 he was Advocate-General in the Parliament, received at Court and lionised in the salons. Becoming an ardent revolutionary, he abstained from voting at Louis XVI's trial, but powerfully helped in the fall of the Girondins. Very intimate with Danton, he shared his fortunes and his death. Endowed with a refined, kindly, clever mind, he has left to us a brief volume of " *Réflexions sur la déclamation* " and some light poetry.



watching for the moment when she might be able to catch sight of him, the son would be in the prison yard playing at ball with some child."

"When the Deputies received the forms of their accusation, Camille went up again to his room, foaming with rage, and strode up and down the room; Philippeaux,<sup>1</sup> who was perceptibly agitated, clasped his hands together, gazed at the sky; Danton returned laughing, and chaffed Camille Desmoulins a great deal. Going into his room:

'Well, Lacroix, what d'you say to it?'

'That I am going to cut my hair so that Sanson may not touch it. It will be quite a different ceremony when Sanson dismembers the vertebræ of the neck for us!'

'I think we should make no reply except in the presence of the two Committees.'

'You're right, we must try and stir up the people.'

When they went off to the Tribunal, Danton and Lacroix put on an extraordinary gaiety; Philippeaux came down with a calm and serene expression, Camille Desmoulins with a dreamy and sorrowful air. He said, before entering at the concierge's:

'I'm going to the scaffold for having shed a few tears over the fate of the unfortunate; my sole regret, as I die, is not to have been able to help them.'

Delaunay (of Angers)<sup>2</sup> went off without even raising his eyes; Fabre d'Eglantine<sup>3</sup> was excessively ill, he was

<sup>1</sup> Pierre Philippeaux, an advocate at Ferrières before the Revolution, was named representative of the Sarthe Department in the Convention, where he voted for Louis XVI's death.

<sup>2</sup> An advocate of Angers, a Member of the Legislative Assembly and of the Convention, who voted for the King's death.

<sup>3</sup> Erstwhile strolling comedian and poet, author of several notable comedies and the song: "Il pleut, bergère," he was Danton's secretary at the Ministry of Justice. He entered the National Convention and proposed the harmonious new names in the Revolution Calendar.



DANTON





assisted to drag himself to the fatal cart. Bazire<sup>1</sup> went off with Hérault de Séchelles, whom he affectionately embraced several times. The latter, who had not been secretly confined at all, had quietly walked in the yard about two hours, whilst waiting for them to fetch him to the Tribunal. He said good-bye to his acquaintances, as if leaving them for a pleasure trip. His grief-stricken servant melted in tears ; he bade him take courage, and comforted all his friends."

. . . . .

" The luckless Camille Desmoulins died wrathful at the people's cowardice and savage at having been Robespierre's dupe. Danton, placed in a cell next to Westermann,<sup>2</sup> did not cease talking, less in order to be heard by Westermann than by us. This terrible Danton was really crushed by Robespierre. He was somewhat ashamed of it ; looking through the cell bars he said many things which perhaps he did not think ; all his phrases were intermixed with oaths or coprological expressions.

Here are a few phrases I have recalled :

' It was on a similar day that I caused the institution of the Revolutionary Tribunal ; but I ask forgiveness for it of God and man. It was not in order that it should be the scourge of humanity, it was to prevent the renewal of the 2nd and 3rd September.'

<sup>1</sup> Claude Bazire, son of a Dijon merchant, an advocate, a Member of the Legislative Assembly and of the Convention, an enemy of the Girondins. He was executed with Delaunay and Fabre on 16 Germinal.

<sup>2</sup> François Joseph Westermann served under General Dumouriez, and then conducted the Vendéan war, where his defeat at Châtillon on 5th July, 1793, caused his suspension and trial before a military tribunal which acquitted him. After having resumed the campaign he was suspended a second time (January, 1794), absolved by the Convention but compromised by his relation with the Dantonists, who dragged him down at their fall.

Strange language in Danton's mouth !

' I leave everything in a frightful muddle ; there is not one of them who understands about government. Amid so many kinds of fury I am not sorry to have attached my name to the few decrees which will show I did not share them. . . .

' They are all a pack of brother Cains. Brissot would have had me guillotined like Robespierre.

' I had a spy who used not to leave me.

' I knew I was bound to be arrested.

' What proves that that — Robespierre is a Nero is that he never spoke to Camille Desmoulins with so much friendship as the day before his arrest. In revolutions, authority remains with the greatest villains. It is better to be a poor fisherman than to rule men.

' The — fools, they will shout " Vive la République ! " as they watch me pass.'

He spoke incessantly about trees, the country, Nature."

Four days before his death Camille Desmoulins wrote to Lucile, his wife, his farewell letter. The original is now in the hands of M. Matton, who received it from the hands of the mother-in-law and sister of Camille Desmoulins. Here is the text given by M. Jules Clarché in the "*Œuvres de Camille Desmoulins*," Vol. II, p. 377 *et sqq.*, which was collated with the original.

" *Duodi Germinal (1st April), 5 o'clock in the morning.*

" Beneficent slumber has suspended my troubles. One is free when one sleeps ; one has no feeling of captivity, Heaven has pitied me. Only a moment ago I saw you

in a dream, I kissed you again and again ; you, Horace<sup>1</sup> and Daronne (Mme. Duplessis), who was in the house ; but our little one had lost an eye through a humour which was coming and spreading over it, and my grief at the accident woke me up. I found myself again in my cell.

“ It was rather light. Unable any longer to see you and hear your replies, for you and my mother were talking to me, I got up to speak to you and write to you at any rate. But, opening the windows, the thought of my solitude, the dreadful bars, the bolts separating me from you vanquished all my firmness of mind. I burst into tears, or rather I sobbed, crying in my tomb : Lucile ! Lucile ! O my dear Lucile, where are you ? (*Here can be observed the trace of a tear.*) Last night I had a similar moment, and my heart likewise melted when I noticed your mother in the garden. A mechanical movement threw me on my knees against the bars. I clasped my hands, as if imploring her pity, she who is lamenting, I am quite sure of it, on your bosom. I saw yesterday her grief (*here again a trace of a tear*), by her handkerchief and her veil which she let down, not being able to endure this sight. When you come let her sit rather nearer to you, so that I can see you better. There is no danger, it seems to me.

“ My spectacles are not very good, I should like you to buy me a pair of those such as I had six months ago, not of silver, but steel, which have two branches that hold on to the head. You will ask for No. 15, the tradesman knows what that means. But, above all, I conjure you, Lolotte, by our eternal love, send me your portrait ; let your painter have pity on me, who am only suffering for having pitied others too much ; let him give you two

<sup>1</sup> His son.



sittings a day. Amid the horror of the prison it will be a festival for me, a day of intoxication and enchantment, when I get that portrait. Meanwhile send me some of your hair, that I may put it next my heart, my dear Lucile ; behold ! I have returned to the time of my first love, when anybody used to interest me by the single fact that he came from your home.

“ Yesterday, when the citizen who brought you my letter had returned, I said to him, ‘ Well ! you’ve seen her,’ just as I once used to say it to that Abbé Laudeville, and I surprised myself looking at him as if there had remained on his clothes, on his whole person, something of your presence, something of you. He is a charitable soul, as he gave you my letter without delay. I shall see him, it seems, twice a day, morning and night. This messenger of our sorrows is becoming as dear to me as would have been the messenger of our joys.

“ I have discovered a fissure in my apartment ; I put my ear to it, I heard groaning, I hazarded a few words, I heard the voice of a suffering invalid. He asked me my name, I told him ; ‘ O my God ! ’ he cried out at my name, falling back on his bed from which he had risen, and I distinctly recognised the voice of Fabre d’Eglantine. ‘ Yes, I am Fabre,’ he said to me, ‘ but you here ! has the counter-Revolution occurred ? ’

“ However, we do not dare speak to each other for fear that hatred may envy us this weak comfort, and if they happened to hear us, we should be separated and shut up more strictly ; for he has a room with a fireplace, and mine would be fairly decent if a cell could be. But, dear friend, you cannot imagine what it is to be secretly confined without knowing why, without having been interrogated, without receiving a single newspaper. It is

living and being dead at one and the same time, it is existing only to feel one is in a coffin. People say innocence is calm, courageous. Ah! my dear Lucile, my well-beloved! Often my innocence is weak like that of a husband, that of a father, that of a son! If it were Pitt and Coburg<sup>1</sup> who were treating me so harshly—, but my colleagues, Robespierre, who signed my dungeon-order! The Republic too! after all I have done for her! That is the reward I get for so many virtues and sacrifices!

“On entering here I saw Hérault-Séchelles, Simon, Fenoux, Chaumette; they are less unhappy; none of them is secretly confined. It is I, who sacrificed myself for five years to so much hatred and peril for the Republic, I who kept my poverty amid the Revolution, I who have nobody to ask forgiveness of in the world except you alone, my dear Lolotte, and to me you have granted it, because you know my heart, despite its weaknesses, is not unworthy of you; it is I whom some men who called themselves my friends, who call themselves Republicans, throw into a cell, in secret, like a conspirator. Socrates drank the hemlock, but at least he saw his friends and his wife in the prison! How much harder it is to be separated from you! The greatest criminal would be excessively punished if he were torn away from a Lucile, otherwise than by death, which at any rate causes me only for a moment to feel the pain of such a separation; but a guilty man would not have been your spouse, and you have only loved me because I lived and breathed for the happiness of my fellow-citizens—My name is being called——

<sup>1</sup> Ministers and representatives of foreign Powers, then enemies of France.

“ At this moment the Commissaries of the Revolutionary Tribunal have just interrogated me. The only question that was put to me was : if I had conspired against the Republic ? What mockery ! and can the purest Republicanism be thus insulted ? You see the fate in store for me. Good-bye, my Lucile, my dear Lolotte, my ‘ good wolf,’ tell my father good-bye. I see in myself an example of men’s savagery and ingratitude. My last moments will not disgrace you. You see my fears were well-founded, my presentiments were always true. I married a woman heavenly through her virtues : I have been a good husband, a good son ; I would also have been a good father. I take with me the esteem and regrets of all true Republicans, of all men of virtue and liberty.

“ I am dying at 34 ; but it is a phenomenon that I have traversed for five years so many precipices of the Revolution without falling into them, and that I still exist, and I calmly lay my head on the pillow of my too numerous writings, which, however, all breathe the same philanthropy, the same desire of making my fellow-citizens happy and free ; and these the tyrants’ hatchet shall not strike. I clearly see that power intoxicates almost all men, that they all say with Dionysius of Syracuse : ‘ Tyranny is a fine epitaph.’ But console yourself, desolate widow ! Your poor Camille’s epitaph is more glorious ; it is that of the Brutuses and the Catos, the tyrannicides.

“ O my dear Lucile, I was born to make verses, to defend the unfortunate, to make you happy, to construct an Otaïti with your mother and my father. I had dreamt of a Republic which everyone would have adored. I could not believe men were so ferocious and unjust. How



could I think that some jokes in my writings against colleagues who had provoked me would wipe out the memory of my services ! I do not hide the fact that I am dying the victim of those jests and of my friendship for Danton. I thank my murderers for making me die with him and Philippeaux ; and since my colleagues have been cowardly enough to abandon us and to lend ear to calumnies which I know not, but which are sure to be the grossest, I can state that we are dying the victims of our courage in denouncing traitors and of our love of truth. We may well take with us this testimony that we are perishing, the last of the Republicans.

“ Forgive me, dear friend, my real life, which I lost from the moment we were separated. Now I busy myself with my memory : I ought much rather to busy myself about getting it forgotten, my Lucile, my good Loulou, my Cachant hen.<sup>1</sup> I beg of you, don’t remain on the branch, don’t call me with cries ; they would break my heart at the bottom of the grave. Go and scratch the ground for your little one, live for my Horace, tell him of me. You will tell him what he cannot hear, that I should dearly have loved him.

“ In spite of my punishment I believe there is a God. My blood will blot out my faults, the weaknesses of humanity, and God will reward me for what good there has been in me, my virtues, my love of freedom. I shall see you again some day, O Lucile, O Annette.<sup>2</sup> Sensitive

<sup>1</sup> Cachant is a little village near Paris on the Bourg-la-Reine road, where Mme. Duplessis had a country house. Camille and Lucile, when they went to see Mme. Duplessis, had often noticed a hen at Cachant who, inconsolable for the loss of her cock, remained perched day and night on the same branch and uttered heartrending cries ; she did not want to take any more nourishment and asked for death. Camille here alludes to this bird.

<sup>2</sup> A familiar name which Camille still gave Mme. Duplessis.

as I was, is death so great a misfortune which frees me from the sight of so many crimes? Good-bye, Loulou; good-bye, my life, my soul, my divinity on earth! I leave you some good friends, all the men there are with virtue and sensibility. Good-bye, Lucile, my Lucile, my dear Lucile! Good-bye, Horace, Annette, Adèle!<sup>1</sup> Good-bye, my own father. I feel the bank of life fleeing before me. I still see Lucile, I see her, my well-beloved! My Lucile! My bound hands embrace you, and my decapitated head still turns its dying eyes upon you."

Eight days after her husband Lucile in turn mounted Sanson's sinister cart. The day before she had sent her mother this little note, the last she wrote:

"Good night, dear mama, a tear escapes my eyes, it is for you.

"I am about to fall asleep in the calm of innocence.

"LUCILE."

## X. THE COMÉDIE-FRANÇAISE IN THE MADELONNETTES

ON 1st August, 1793, the Comédie-Française gave a first representation of a five-act comedy in verse by François de Neufchâteau: "*Paméla ou la vertu récompensée*." The piece was full of violent tirades against the Jacobins and the Revolutionary Government. In giving "*Paméla*" the Comédie-Française at the same time made a regular political manifestation, for nobody was unaware of their Royalist feelings.

<sup>1</sup> Lucile's sister; she did not marry, and lived always with her mother, whose sole consolation she was after the deaths of Camille, Lucile, and M. Duplessis.

The play had a violent reception, fights took place in the hall, and the Commune denounced the play to the Jacobins. On the night of 3-4th September the comedians and the author were arrested at their abodes and imprisoned in the Madelonnettes.<sup>1</sup>

Among the actors was Fleury, the writer of the story we here publish. He was born at Chartres, 27th November, 1750, made his bow at the Comédie-Française on 7th March, 1774, and was made a member of the company 12th May, 1778. His contemporaries unite in saying he was one of the best actors of the time. Thanks to a former actor, Charles de la Bussière by name, who had become an employee in the offices of the Committees, and who stole their briefs in order to destroy them, the comedians escaped the guillotine. Fleury here gives us the account of their detention in the Madelonnettes (they were next transferred to the Picpus prison) in his "Mémoires," which the actor Laffitte drew up from his notes. Picturesque details abound in it, and it is a chapter that cannot be neglected in the story of the Revolution prisons.

Having retired on the 1st April, 1818, Fleury went away to the Loiret at Valençay, where he died, 3rd March, 1822. He was interred in the Orleans cemetery.<sup>2</sup>

"The building of the Madelonnettes was a house reserved for thieves and recidivists, but the ever-growing number of arrests and especially the 'batches' (*fournées*) of the

<sup>1</sup> "In 1866, in order to alter the Rue Turbigo, this prison, situated in the Rue des Fontaines, No. 12, was demolished." Ch. Virmaître, "Paris historique," p. 284.

<sup>2</sup> Georges Monval, archivist of the Comédie-Française, "Liste alphabétique des sociétaires depuis Molière jusqu'à nos jours," Paris, 1900, p. 56.



early days of September, 1793, old style, or, if you please, slave style, so encumbered these dens of the Committee of Public Safety that all the gaols became places of arrest.

A little before our arrival the Madelonnettes retained only their usual boarders : those worthy people, called, according to the local vocabulary, by the suggestive name of ' pailleux ' ( ' straw ' persons ) lodged in the upper floors. The first-class division was composed of those who had rendered themselves culpable whilst following the fashion of the old régime, the second-class of more advanced subjects who had set themselves in hostility against the nation, although they had followed the new régime : that is to say the ' pailleux ' were purely and simply thieves assembled together with forgers of assignats.

Originally places had been arranged to contain about 200 people ; our arrival made the number up to 300, a little more or less, I do not quite remember ; but think of the crush ! The prisoners had to be huddled together, pasted together as it were : there was even an arrangement by which several corridors contained camp-bedsteads.

In order to be accurate I should add that there were not enough beds for everyone during the few days whilst there was a kind of overflow of prisoners, who arrived in vehicles from all parts of Paris ; and, a fact as rare as noteworthy ! in the case of the Madelonnettes it was actually the good intentions of the concierge which caused extreme discomfort to the detained for a considerable time.

Among the Cerberuses of the Paris houses of arrest, among those dull lackeys, those imbecile, cruel or cowardly lackeys, possessing power without pity, M.

Vaubertrand, junior, distinguished himself as one of the honourable exceptions one finds pleasure in mentioning.

The husband of a kindly woman who used to call us her boarders, the father of a charming child who nicknamed us his 'pigeons,'<sup>1</sup> he derived from family love all the good feelings which made him popular with us. Hating his employment, but obliged to stick to it, he was able to conciliate the difficulties of his position with the duties of humanity; M. Vaubertrand endured for us complaints from inside, and for himself blame from outside. In very truth our position was often better than his.

This good fellow thought he ought to alleviate as much as lay in his power the lot of people who could not be charged with any other crime than the flexible one of being suspect; and as a beginning he had the space in which they were shut up more comfortably arranged. These rooms, giving on the back parts of the building, were a species of pits five feet square at most; a man of fair height stretching out his arm could easily touch the ceiling; two windows, fitted with six panes, which would cost four sous apiece at a plumber's, striped outside with broad gratings, scarce let the air in; the places thus arranged were to receive twelve persons; so they could only hold as their sole furniture twelve cribs, stuck together, each crib getting a worn-out mattress.

The first care of the kind concierge was to do away with the cribs and to replace them with wooden beds; but as they took more space than the others, the rooms which formerly held twelve persons were reduced to eight; so there was more comfort but less room: and space! space!—To have a week in gaol is enough to teach

<sup>1</sup> The pun is untranslatable: "pigeonniers" instead of "pensionnaires."

you the meaning of a square foot, more or less, in a cloistered life.

That was how things were when we had to be found room for ; and that we did not sleep roughly on the straw on the first night, we owed to the generous hospitality of some veterans of the second and third corridors, who made arrangements to do us that civility. We were not there as isolated individuals, we were a literary body, taking with us into exile all the gracious past of France ; we represented in brief everything that delights, everything that unites, everything that revives ; so there was honoured in us a company which had shown itself strong, brave, united, at a time when apart from the trivial courage of dying all courage was ceasing, when all inspiring things were being discouraged, when all strength was vanishing. The Comédie-Française in prison appeared a great and sad spectacle ; by thus attacking the most kindly and most fascinating of arts the masters of France seemed to be uttering to the world their most significant message. With us were bound up a thousand illustrious souvenirs, with us were awakened a thousand ideas of glory, of which our incarceration was the death-knell.

It was fine !—I still see the long file of prisoners in a double row, hats off, to begin with ; I heard their long ‘vivats,’ their repeated applause, I see *ourselves* pass among great people, ministers of the King, generals, magistrates ; I see even some sansculottes, true believers, greeting us with lively acclamation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Among the prisoners detained in the Madelonnettes at this period Fleury mentions : M. de Boulainvilliers, General Lanoue, M. de Crosne, M. Angrand d’Alleray, the Baron Marguerites, M. Jousseureau, M. Lecoulteux de Canteleu, to whose family belonged the château of Malmaison, M. d’Estournelles, the Minister La Tour du Pui, etc.



After our provisional installation several of these gentlemen came and visited us ; we found ourselves among friends, and had it not been so, we should not have failed of a kindly welcome, each fresh captive being sure of being received with an altogether amiable eagerness, I ought almost to say, attentive affection and tenderness ; those souls who were already resigned, already used to the habits of privation and pain, seemed to be in a secret league to offer their services to the inexperience of new-comers and fortify their hearts ; the cells were coquettishly introduced, some of their comforts were boasted of, their discomforts were disguised, you were taught the characters of the warders, you were offered help of every kind : to moderate the first grief, to temper the emotion, such is the greater secret of all comforters ; but in prison we found this advantage, that the comforters of the day before were the devoted friends, the brothers of the next.

The next day we had, of course, to relate our adventures, the hospitality of prisons is exacting on that score ; but the demand is easy to satisfy, everybody likes telling again the story of the persecution he is undergoing and the fight he is putting up against it. It is true, it was then always rather the same thing, the tale of force versus weakness, but it was also occasionally the tale of silly force versus astute weakness : an account of galloping over open country, secret hiding-places, caves, moving panels, deep, underground passages, disguises and imbroglios, which were afterwards employed in all the romances of the Directory, hackneyed, rather naive methods, but always interesting when a man's life is at stake, and especially when that man, still full of anxiety, absorbed in the memory of the peril, panting almost with

yesterday's fight, relates to you with fiery ardour, with despair, his fears of the abyss, in the abyss itself into which he has fallen ; there are no longer any common-places then, there is not even a superannuated gag which does not seem to the listeners an effort of rare imagining, a spark of sublime inspiration.

Our prison was the unhealthiest in Paris ; it was the fullest and lacked air. Yet the Madelonnettes had a spacious garden ; but we were never allowed the enjoyment of it by the justice of that period ; in vain we offered to pay for the additional warders which the supervision of that promenade would necessitate.

'Patience !' the Commissary Marino would say, 'you'll be transferred ; your stay here is but provisional, you'll go elsewhere ; huge prisons, airy prisons await you : patience ! This is merely a kind of waiting-ante-room.'

Think of the ante-room ! Four corridors fifty paces long. At one end are the horrible pails for the use of 300 detained, spreading unendurable stench. When the days are foggy it is impossible to keep the doors open without running the risk of asphyxia ; it is true that at the other end of the corridors there is a small window ; but it hardly furnishes a current of air sufficient to disperse the impure atmosphere, and, moreover, Sieur Marino has asked for it only to be kept open during the inspection. Luckily this order is never observed, and our well-wishing concierge, after hermetically closing it in the presence of the Cerberus, goes and opens it again as soon as he has turned on his heel.

Meanwhile another kind of epidemic was about to combine its ravages with those of smallpox, and the prison of the Madelonnettes threatened to be devoured

by it, when upon our reiterated complaints and at the instance of some courageous people outside who dared speak for us, our doctor, the zealous Dupontet, was allowed to do everything prescribed by science and humanity for the preservation of the prisoners.

That order had a semblance of justice; but the justice was only on paper. Everything was granted except what was needful: air, space, fewer prisoners and exercise. Who would think it? We were refused even an infirmary.

But Dupontet's science was as artful as his heart was good. He ordered the opening at a fixed time and at the same time of the doors and windows, so that the air penetrated everywhere as if in a sieve. Further, for at least a quarter of an hour, vinegar was employed in large quantities.

As for us, he prescribed us vigorous exercise before dinner and supper and that we should return thereupon to our rooms. He had himself drawn up the rules of this exercising, which was soon converted into a military drill. We chose our superior officers from those who had the finest voices and those who knew strategy: General Lanoue<sup>1</sup> and Saint-Prix<sup>2</sup> were unanimously voted for, and, under their command, we performed marches, counter-marches and evolutions, which would have done honour to the best-trained and best-disciplined of corps.

<sup>1</sup> One of the generals who had served under Dumouriez and become suspect owing to the latter's treachery. He was arrested after his defeat at Aldenhoven and brought to the bar of the Convention, confined in the Madelonnettes and sentenced to death by the Revolutionary Tribunal.

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Amable Foucault, called Saint-Prix, born in Paris, Rue de Grenelle Saint-Honoré, 9th June, 1758, made his bow at the Comédie-Française, 9th November, 1782, was constituted a Member 24th March, 1744, retired 1st April, 1818, and died 28th October, 1834.



The night-exercises had something singular and original about them.

As the feebly lighted gallery did not give enough light several of our militia used to hold lighted candles in their hands; we thus participated in the warlike procession and march. Those darkened corridors, those pallid men, those flickering shadows, those will-o'-the-wisps, crossing, uncrossing, getting into line, casting uncertain reflections on figured dressing-gowns, on overcoats of white piqué, on night-caps, on faces which would not have laughed for an empire, and which were the more funny to look at because the light, being thus carried in the hand, coming from bottom to top, seemed to bedim with bistre all the leading points of the countenance so as to give prominence to the look alone; all this medley of darkness and light, marches and halting, echoes of voices and intervals of silence, would have made an excellent subject for a skilful painter.

The concierge's wife came at times to see us: she pretended that when we were in full swing we seemed to her worthy of Rembrandt's brush; I think she used to flatter us a trifle, and little Vaubertrand's laughter made me more than once think we resembled some grotesques in the manner of Collot, especially when the kind M. d'Alleray,<sup>1</sup> taper in hand, used to go and burn the chin or the coat of M. l'ex-Lieutenant-Général de Crosne,<sup>2</sup> who could never understand what it meant to start off from the left foot."

<sup>1</sup> Denis - François - Angran d'Alleray, former Civil Lieutenant, guillotined 9 Floréal, Year II (28th April, 1794).

<sup>2</sup> Louis-Thiroux de Crosne, former Councillor of State and Lieutenant-General of Police, guillotined 9 Floréal, Year II (28th April, 1794).

## XI. THE PRISONERS OF THE MADELONNETTES

*Extract from the "Tableau des Prisons de Paris," by  
Philippe-Edme Coittant.*

"THE official defenders were the only persons who had the right of entering this prison. Cahier, one of them, was in what was called the 'foyer' (ante-room) of the third floor; he was looking for a prisoner whose defence had been entrusted to him; his gaze fixes itself on a fine sansculotte, the citizen Grappin, who on 2nd September, 1792 (Old Style), had snatched him from murderous hands and saved his life.

They stare at each other without stirring, they recognise each other, tears flow from their eyes, they rush together and embrace and remain several minutes like that, without being able to utter a word. At length after further hearty embraces cries Cahier :

'Eh ! but, my dear fellow, why do I find you here ?'

Grappin relates the reasons for his arrest.

'What an injustice !' rejoins Cahier ; 'dispose of me, of my fortune ; my life belongs to you, you gave it to me a second time ; it's all right, cheer up, I shall not sleep before I have got you released.'

This scene had melted everybody's heart ; there was a general bursting into tears. Grappin, who had saved more than sixty persons at the Abbaye, only regained his freedom by the Revolution of 10 Thermidor."

"The citizen Boivin, a wine merchant, of Porte Bernard, was accused of having allowed the sale of the *numéraire*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The creation of the assignats enhanced the value of gold to a notable degree. A regular speculation about the *numéraire* was organised during the Revolution.

in his house ; he had already been interrogated before the Revolutionary Tribunal, he was about to appear there a second time to be sentenced. One morning he is summoned ; he goes off. We were not without disquiet as to the issue of his sentence. At length we hear he is acquitted. He arrives himself about 5 p.m. and confirms the good tidings, adding :

‘ I was acquitted on surety ; they required 1000 crowns ; not having them, I offered to sign a bond for a much larger amount ; I was refused. I must get the sum demanded, otherwise I shall stop in prison until I have got it.’

Logette, a business man, living in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, noticing his embarrassment, said :

‘ Is that all you want to be free ? Here are 1000 crowns ; go and enjoy that precious good.’

‘ Allow me at any rate to give you my note of hand.’

‘ No, the word of an honest man suffices me.’

Tears of gratitude are the benefactor’s reward ; they embrace, and during the melting scene Logette himself seemed the obliged party.

Meanwhile the news had spread in the prison that Boivin would have to remain there until he found 1000 crowns for his surety. Vanhove, senior, who was playing picquet with Fleury, heard of it ; he pulls out his pocket-book, crying :

‘ How glad I am ! I can manage the amount. I’ve got about 4500 livres ; 1500 will be enough for the period I reckon on remaining in prison. Where is he ? ’

He runs off to offer him the money. Boivin had gone. He learns that Logette had anticipated him ; he consoles himself for having been unable to oblige a brother by reflecting that there was in the prison a man whom



fortune had placed in the position of coming to the succour of an unfortunate fellow.

Prisons were formerly almost always the schools for crime ; ours had become one for well-doing. How often did not the wealthy Dupontet<sup>1</sup> go about arousing the sensibility of the arrested by depicting to them a heart-rending picture of the misfortunes and urgent needs of some of our comrades ? And I must say that his endeavours were not fruitless ; indigence was helped and never humiliated.

One day a straw-prisoner ( ' pailleux ' ), whose honesty was commendable, is acquitted by the Revolutionary Tribunal. The decree granting compensation to citizens whose innocence had been established was not yet in existence ; the unhappy wretch is absolutely naked. He had a journey of twenty leagues to go afoot in order to reach his home. A collection is made ; he is at once equipped from head to foot ; he is given the wherewithal to return to his domestic hearth ; and as the result of the collection had been considerable the surplus was distributed among the other ' pailleux ' (straw-prisoners), who in their gratitude offered up vows for their benefactors."

## XII. PRISON RÉGIME AT PORT-LIBRE

*From " Maison d'arrêt de Port-Libre, communément appelée Bourbe ; Tableau des Prisons de Paris," by Philippe-Edme Coittant.*

" THREE very distinct classes could be observed in this establishment. Those who paid for the indigent, those who kept themselves, and those who were paid for. The

<sup>1</sup> This Dupontet, whose self-sacrificingness and obligingness the actor Fleury praises in his " Mémoires," was the prison doctor.

distinction was repugnant to those who had profoundly at heart the principles of equality, and they were a numerous body.

There was a big foyer at the end of the passage on the first floor, which was called the drawing-room, in which were laid six tables with sixteen covers each, where the wealthy used to dine. Thirty sous a day were allowed those who were able to maintain themselves, and bread was given all the prisoners at the expense of the rich, who contributed each according to his means.

In order to make a subvention to the expenses of the house an inside administration had been established which was perfectly organised. A treasurer used to look after the collection and regulate all the expenses ; wood, water, light, stoves, small tables in the cells, chairs and other lesser furniture. All was bought and done at the cost of the wealthy. They were even made to buy a dog to keep watch over them, for which they paid 240 livres. The expenses of the guard should not be forgotten, which amounted daily to 150 livres. Those expenses were always paid until Prairial, the time when the Commune paid their visit and took over the interior control of the prisons.

At night they met in the 'drawing-room,' in the centre of which was set a big table ; everyone, man and woman, brought their lights. The men sat around the big table, some would read, others write ; it was a regular cabinet of literature. The strictest silence was preserved, and those who got excited took care to speak in low tones.

The women would arrange themselves about a small table and there engage in the tasks of their sex, some embroidering, others knitting.

Then there would be a little supper of a kind ; every-

one would be busy at laying the covers, and the merriment following the silence caused them to forget they were in prison. In point of fact nothing looked less like one than that house. No gratings, no bolts, the doors were only closed by a latch. Good society, excellent company, respect and attentions for the women ; one might have believed them all to be members of one and the same family gathered together in a huge castle. The 'family,' growing in consequence of the numerous arrests, disorganised the management of the prison.

Rich people and sansculottes used to be sent in masses. The arrivals were put on the list so as to make them contribute. Collectors were assigned to every corridor, and efforts were made to subvention the expenses, which always exceeded the receipts. Nevertheless it was as much as could be done to make both ends meet. The number of citizenesses having increased owing to arrests, they would go to the drawing-room at 7 p.m. ; the readers then got up from their seats ; the women took their place, performed their small jobs there, especially mending, and the men talked with them. Further, on fixed days amusements were varied by music or the reading of various works. Vigée contributed not a little to make our sojourn in prison less dreadful. Then on other occasions we would play at bouts-rimés ; it gave those who liked the game much pleasure. We would blind ourselves in such ways to our pains, our anxieties, and try to deceive ourselves about our wretched position.

The ci-devant Baron de Wirbach, with the first *virole d'amour* we ever heard, was full of resources for entertaining the prisoners ; he lent himself to sweetening our lot with the best grace in the world.

Though some persons did not seem friendly to the idea



of equality, this trifling difference was blotted out by the unity prevailing among all the arrested ; for as the prohibition to communicate had been set aside from the first day, all the sansculottes in the prison communicated with the other prisoners, assisted at our concerts, at our readings, and were not the least ornament of the drawing-room ; however, at 9 p.m. we had to appear to the roll-call.

Everybody withdrew to their cells, but ever in the hope of meeting next day. It was with real pain we heard the wretched bell which forced us to separate, and especially when it came in the middle of a reading or concert. Sometimes the concierge gave us a quarter of an hour extra, and we showed him our gratitude. After attending the roll-call we were allowed to gather together either in the hall ( ' foyer ' ) or in our rooms. Men and women who had acquaintances lodged in the outside buildings of the house had permission to go and spend the rest of the night there, provided they were furnished with cards signed by the concierge. Such little enjoyments made the deprivation of freedom less hard to bear.

Money is more all-powerful in prison than anywhere else ; thus it was by means of liberal donations that you could get these cards, a comfortable apartment, a room with a fireplace and permission to see your relatives. This abuse, whilst it swelled the purse of the controller of the establishment, caused loud murmurs among the sansculottes, who were indignant at the preference granted by greed to wealth.

Each fresh arrival would find a brother, a friend who welcomed him and mitigated the pain of early grief by kindly attentions. But nothing would escape observing eyes, and it was easy to discover among the prisoners those

whose feelings were not very warmly in favour of our Revolution. Differences became particularly marked when the evening paper was read, which was done aloud. When a victory was announced some faces grew pale: stifled sighs, nervous contractions, shuffling of feet proclaimed the incorrigible aristocracy. All the prisoners thought that as suspects they would remain in the house until it might please the then authorities to let them out; but they saw their mistake on 18th March (Old Style), the date when men began to be taken away from the establishment and sent to the scaffold.

After that Port-Libre became like the other prisons, an ante-room of the Conciergerie and the Revolutionary Tribunal, and we only reckoned that day lucky when nobody was sought for and fetched away.

There were three promenades: the so-called palissade-walk, which we only had the use of in Prairial; that of the cloister-court and that of the acacia-court. The cloister-walk, which was allowed us from the first days of our arrival, was the only one we enjoyed for more than three months.

When the palissade-walk was ready and the communications were established, few people went there, and one hardly saw anybody but the widows, children and relatives of those who had been sentenced. There they gave vent to their sorrow. They used to meet, to console themselves mutually for their losses, and the ground was often wet with their tears.

The acacia-promenade derived its name from a tall, fine acacia round a grassy mound which had been raised as a bench. It was the rendezvous of cheerfulness and merriment. People went there after the roll-call and indulged in the fresh air till 11 p.m. Persons dwelling in

the surrounding buildings might spend the night there, for it was not closed. Yet the greatest decorum was observed, and never did any scandalous anecdote arouse criticism or flatter malevolence."

"Jousseran, who had quite recently arrived from the Madelonnettes, had just been the victim of a very considerable robbery ; 8050 livres had been taken from him. Jousseran had 17 assignats of 400 livres and 150 livres' worth of small assignats in a pocket-book which he had put in one of the pockets of a waistcoat, the whole being shut up in a little deal box with a faulty lock.

He lived in a cell for two persons, which only shut with a latch. A bundle of linen had been brought him before dinner which he had omitted to put away. On leaving the refectory he found the box open and broken ; he looks into his waistcoat and misses the pocket-book. Commissaries are appointed to search for the stolen goods ; they enter every room in the building ; they make a careful search without finding anything.

Another method was tried, with no better result : a dark room was left open with an invitation to all the citizens to enter it one after the other and to remain two minutes there in order to give the thief, if he were capable of remorse, time to restore the pocket-book. When this operation was ended nothing was found there. Some Commissaries of the Section came over here to take Jousseran's declaration."



## SOME NOTES ON MAXIMILIEN DE ROBESPIERRE

### I. A PROVINCIAL ADVOCATE

A YOUNG man in an olive-coloured suit is walking slowly, sadly along the peaceful streets of Arras.

The lukewarm sun and yellow rays of autumn are pouring down on the sleepy, bleak, dreary town where curious eyes, hidden behind muslined windows, watch the lean youth wrapped up in his neat but shabby attire.

He is at this period 27,<sup>1</sup> and his impassive visage, with his brows indented by a big wrinkle, seems to breathe the bitterness of having been an early orphan.

At this indefinite hour of his existence his life already appears to breathe the majestic sadness of tragedy of which Jean Racine speaks so divinely in his Preface to "Bérénice." Avoiding the streets of the town he goes off to dream amid the fascinating beauty of Flanders's peaceful landscapes.

Henri Martin says at this period he had neither the qualities nor the defects of youth. He was the one whom the Abbé Hérivaux, the Professor of Rhetoric at the Louis-le-Grand College, used to call "The Roman." His pensive youth was saturated in the spectacle of nature.

<sup>1</sup> Maximilien-Isidore Robespierre was born 6th May, 1758; his mother, Jacqueline-Marguerite Carrant, had a daughter Charlotte, born 8th February, 1760; another daughter, Henriette, 28th December, 1761; a son, Augustin, 21st January, 1763, and a still-born child which cost her her life, 7th July, 1764. She was twenty-nine. He was thus an orphan at nine.

On his solitary walks he reflects that those plains witnessed the shock of Turenne, Condé and the Spaniards, that those fortified esplanades are marked by Vauban's genius, and that the Treaty of the Pyrenees, which united Arras in 1659 to Louis XIV's crown, restored his country to its natural destinies.

He is at that time a young man of sensibility, certainly, but not a gusher ; he reads Rousseau under autumn's yellowed leaves and weeps with Emile on the contrarieties of fate. The national discipline, the French sense of order gradually penetrate him, and when in May, 1789, after paying 35 livres 10 sols for his seat in the diligence, he starts for Paris and the States General, he feels himself confessedly ready for his great future rôle.

Robespierre's life at Arras is rather curious to follow in detail. He took up his abode in several different houses : in 1781 in the Rue du Saumon ; in 1783, Rue des Trinitaires ; 1786, Rue du Collège ; 1787, Rue des Rats-Porteurs. The house is to-day gloomy, repellent, guarding behind its old stones the secret of a great life which has been blasphemously calumniated.

His life there was simple, poor, obscure. At his father's death he was left without means ; it has been written he had no patrimony.<sup>1</sup> In his profession as barrister he used the same zealous and studious care as when he was one of the most notable pupils at the Louis-le-Grand College in Paris.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alissan de Chazet, "Mémoires, Souvenirs et Portraits," Vol. II, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> In the general examination lists of the Louis-le-Grand College we find his name several times : "Ludovicus, Franciscus, Maximilianus, Maria, Isidorus de Robespierre ; Atrebas, e collegio Ludovici Magni." In his fourth year, 1772, he won 2nd prize for the Latin theme and 6th



ROBESPIERRE





An interesting query may be put here : What was his pleading like ? Some, like Michelet, have thought he had a colourless talent,<sup>1</sup> others have seen in him a type of the academic orator, or a meticulous lawyer,<sup>2</sup> or a fine brain with cadenced speech,<sup>3</sup> but wordy ; and basing their belief on his smiling confession, " I am a chatterer," incline to think verbosity was one of his defects.<sup>4</sup> Strange that among so many contrary opinions no one could make up his mind to adopt one of them only.

Read again his pleadings, that for the *Sieur de Vissery de Boisvallé* in a lightning-conductor affair, that for *Mme. Duhamel*, the servant of *Captain Carnot*, in a matter of succession ; nowhere, even in that long, copious speech in the *Dupond* affair, does that fault appear with which his " sombre eloquence " <sup>5</sup> has been so much reproached. It rather appears that *Rome* inspired his harangues with an exact, dry eloquence, the taste for order and classical sobriety. His eloquence is that of a factious rhetorician, says *Roederer*<sup>6</sup> ; it is an *olla-podrida*, adds *Malouet*,<sup>7</sup> a borrowed jargon, rejoins *Taine*,<sup>8</sup> a talent below the middling, woven of ill expres-

" accessit " for Latin translation ; in his second year, 1774, 4th accessit for Latin verse and 4th accessit for Latin translation ; in rhetoric, 1775, 2nd prize for Latin verse, 2nd prize for Latin translation, and 3rd accessit for Greek translation. In 1776 he won 4th accessit for Latin translation.

<sup>1</sup> J. Michelet, " *La Révolution Française*," Vol. VI, " *La Terreur* " ; Preface of 1869, III.

<sup>2</sup> Doctors Cabanès and Nass, " *La Névrose révolutionnaire*," pp. 412, 413.

<sup>3</sup> Philarète Chasles, " *Mémoires*," Paris, 1876.

<sup>4</sup> Jean Bernard, " *Quelques poésies de Robespierre*," p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> J.-P. Picqué, " *L'Hermite des Pyrénées*."

<sup>6</sup> " *Mémoires du Comte Roederer* " (former *Procureur* of the *Commune*).

<sup>7</sup> Malouet, " *Mémoires*," Vol. II, p. 135.

<sup>8</sup> Taine, " *Origines de la France Contemporaine*," Vol. III.

sions, observes Mme. Roland,<sup>1</sup> whose style, everyone knows, is the poorest in the world ; finally, it is all chilly, pretentious, in the style of a provincial academician,<sup>2</sup> according to Pastor Dide.

He is a bad advocate,<sup>3</sup> his voice is harsh and changes, when in wrath, into a kind of howling very like that of hyenas,<sup>4</sup> his words are dry, pedantic, uncouth, harsh,<sup>5</sup> his diction rough, trivial, made up of platitudes,<sup>6</sup> weak, dry, monotonous, shrill,<sup>7</sup> lifeless, although the habit of speaking from the tribune lent him ease of speech,<sup>8</sup> his addresses were didactic, his eloquence great,<sup>9</sup> his voice, though a head-voice, pleasant ;<sup>10</sup> to conclude, Camille Desmoulins esteemed it sublime ; at intervals it draws forth tears, it reaches the height of Demosthenes's talent.<sup>11</sup>

We must ask the reader to excuse us from more numerous quotations. Those we have just given prove to what a degree the great Jacobin's personality has remained contradictory even in the eyes of contemporary historians. A singular destiny is that of this man who

<sup>1</sup> "Mémoires de Mme. Roland," Vol. I, p. 83, 1865 edition.

<sup>2</sup> Auguste Dide, "Hérétiques et Révolutionnaires (Les Orateurs de la Constituante)," Paris, 1887, pp. 222, 223.

<sup>3</sup> Abbé de Montgaillard, "Histoire de France."

<sup>4</sup> Charles Nodier, "Revue de Paris," quoted in the "Mémoires authentiques [apocryphal] de Maximilien de Robespierre," Brussels, 1830, Vol. I, pp. 90, 91.

<sup>5</sup> Victorien Sardou, "La Maison de Robespierre," Paris, 1895.

<sup>6</sup> "Nouvelles politiques," 13 Thermidor, Year II.

<sup>7</sup> Jean Bernard, "Les lundis révolutionnaires ; histoire anecdotique de la Révolution Française," 1790, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> "Dictionnaire historique et biographique des hommes de la Révolution."

<sup>9</sup> F. A. Aulard, "Figures oubliées de la Révolution ; Fabre d'Eglantine." ("La Nouvelle Revue," Vol. XXXV, 1st July, 1885.)

<sup>10</sup> "Mémoires de Fleury, de la Comédie-Française (1789-1822)," p. 266.

<sup>11</sup> Camille Desmoulins to his father, "the 12th January of the Year II of Liberty" (1791).



has been blasphemed by his enemies, defended and attacked by his friends !

However that may be, there can be no dispute about the success of his advocacy at the Arras bar. Almost all the cases he defends, right from his obscure débuts, he wins. Is it possible that later on his unadorned, wearisome eloquence should have dictated to the Convention the laws inspired by Maximilien's genius, and that this fecundity of a provincial academician should have silenced Danton's thunderbolt and Vergniaud's genius ? There are left to us his wonderful discourses, which are unique in literary history and which have never since been equalled. It is there we must look for the origin of the enormous, entirely moral power, which places Robespierre at the head of the Revolutionary Government.

. . . . .

Arras also saw him under another aspect.

On 15th November, 1785, Saint-Harduin, the permanent secretary of the Arras Academy, introduced him as a member to the "Rosati." It was a Bacchic society, where roses, wine and poetry were honoured. Under the signboard of Blagny in the Faubourg d'Avesnes, and, on the banks of the quickly flowing Scarpe the Rosati held their meetings.

The rules were boyish and charming. On entering the candidate plucked a rose, inhaled the smell thrice and emptied a bowl of rosy wine to the health of all present and future Rosati. His godfather gave him a kiss of brotherly welcome, and handed him a diploma on rose paper sealed with a wax rose and perfumed with rose-water. After which the newly initiated sang a couplet of welcome.

"To indulge in honest amusement," wrote a member to the Abbé Ménége, "to lighten oneself with the rays of true philosophy, to laugh at ambition and a thousand important nullities, to restore the simple, frank tone of our old writers, despite the preciosity and superciliousness of several contemporary celebrities, that is the chief aim of the Rosati."<sup>1</sup>

Performing a trill in a pleasant voice,<sup>2</sup> Robespierre sung his couplets according to the consecrated custom :

### LA ROSE

#### REMERCIEMENTS À MESSIEURS DE LA SOCIÉTÉ DES ROSATI.

Air : "Résiste-moi, belle Aspasia."

"Je vois l'épine avec la rose  
Dans les bouquets que vous m'offrez (*bis*) ;  
Et lorsque vous me célébrez,  
Vos vers découragent ma prose.  
Tout ce qu'on m'a dit de charmant,  
Messieurs, a droit de me confondre ;  
La rose est votre compliment,  
L'épine est la loi d'y répondre (*bis*).

Dans cette fête si jolie  
Règne l'accord le plus parfait (*bis*) ;  
On ne fait pas mieux un couplet,  
Un n'a pas de fleur mieux choisie.  
Moi seul, j'accuse mes destins  
De ne m'y voir pas à ma place ;  
Car la rose est dans nos jardins  
Ce que vos vers sont au Parnasse (*bis*).

A vos bontés, lorsque j'y pense,  
Ma foi, je n'y vois pas d'excès (*bis*),  
Et le tableau de vos succès  
Affaiblit ma reconnaissance.  
Pour de semblables jardiniers  
Le sacrifice est peu de chose ;  
Quand on est si riche en lauriers,  
On peut bien donner une rose (*bis*)."

<sup>1</sup> "Archives du Nord," 3rd Series.

<sup>2</sup> "Mémoires de Fleury, de la Comédie-Française (1789-1822)," p. 246.

The piece is delightful, of a youthful freshness ; it is one of those rare ones in which Maximilien de Robespierre's sensitive, loving soul opened itself to view, freed from the grave austerity which enveloped him in the awful days of '93.

Among the Rosati the young advocate enjoyed the only peaceful hours of his life, storm-tossed by the Revolution. You might see in the arbour festooned with clematis and waving honeysuckle the painter Bergaigne ; the musician Pierrebott ; Captain Carnot of the Royal Engineers, whom Maximilien was to meet later at the offices of the Committee of Public Safety ; Foacies de Ruzé, the advocate-general of the Artois Council ; the Abbé Berthe ; Daubigny, Professor of Theology ; Engineer-Major Champmorin ; Captain Chevalier Dumény ; Baillet de Vaugrenant, Major of Arras Citadel ; the poet Legay ; the advocate Charamond ; Dubois de Fosseux ; the Abbé Roman ; Desruelles, and Saint-Harduin, the godfather of the Rosati, of Robespierre.

In the eleventh couplet of his song " La Coupe " Maximilien offered them the affectionate homage of his friendship :

" Ami, de ce discours usé,  
Concluons qu'il faut boire.  
Avec le bon ami Ruzé  
Qui n'aimerait à boire ?  
A l'ami Carnot,  
A l'amiable Cot,  
A l'instant, je veux boire  
A vous, cher Fosseux,  
De ce vin mousseux  
Je veux encore boire."

In a life reserved for the most tragic blows of Fate his hour of pleasure was to be brief. " He was at his house at Tibur when he was enjoying the first quiet moments



of his life," is written in the "Dialogue de Sylla et d'Eucrate." He has the book on his table, with those of Jean-Jacques, Racine and Corneille, and maybe he has read the phrase and will recollect it one day. He leaves Arras in 1789, and whatever may be said<sup>1</sup> it shall witness his return two years later in October, 1791, when it shall bestow on him at the gates of the town the civic crown and the laurel wreath earned by his noble work.<sup>2</sup> It was his last triumph in his native Artois.

Through those peaceful streets, those sleepy squares where the sun gilds the ancient stones, terrible processions will soon pass. The Professor of Rhetoric at the Oratory of Beaune, the former priest Joseph Lebon, now become a Conventional, will instal in those public resorts the guillotine, the national levelling razor, and there the "apricots will fall" whilst the band will play Republican hymns.<sup>3</sup> Robespierre being absent, the "beneficent" Terror, beloved of the Oratorian Fouché, was to be the Order of the day at Arras.

The bloody orders of the envoy of the Committee of Public Safety issued from the house in the Rue Saint Maurice where Lebon lodged, from that tile-turreted mansion, with honeysuckles drooping from the top of the wall on to the low, gloomy, repulsive door, from that house which is dumb to-day and seems yet haunted by something of its tragic past. The women of Arras were

<sup>1</sup> "Robespierre died without daring to reappear at Arras," writes F.-C. Galart de Montjoye, in "L'histoire de la conjuration de Maximilien Robespierre" (new edition at Maret's, bookseller, Maison Egalité, cour des Fontaines, Paris, Year IV, 1796, p. 12). The statement is untrue. We have letters of Robespierre written from Arras in 1791.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of Maximilien de Robespierre to Duplay; Arras, 16th October, 1791.

<sup>3</sup> P.-J. Thénard, "Quelques souvenirs de la Terreur à Cambrai."

forbidden to wear elaborate toilettes. Civic poverty was decreed. At the Revolutionary Tribunal sat "some hairy beasts," shirts open, in rags, bare-chested, red cap on ear, sabre on knee and pistols on the table, under the winking eyes of Lebon who wore arms in his girdle.

Still, he was not the barbarous and sanguinary brute represented to us by his decrees. Says Louise Fusil in her "Souvenirs d'une actrice," he has been seen clean, elegant, carefully dressed, heedful of the proper ordering of his hair and the folds of his cravat, with a gentle face. But the elegance of this dandy did not spare heads. The old women "sneezed in the sack," because *what use are they?* was the query of the Oratorian converted to the cult of the sacrosanct guillotine.

Meanwhile the child of Arras, the melancholy, lean advocate of 1785, was seen in the Tribune of the National Convention like lightning in the darkness of a storm. His icy, electric eloquence galvanised the great inert social body, hurled the alarm of "The Nation in danger" as far as the armies on the frontiers. The thunders of that avenging voice struck down heads that were too high, trampled on the proud and haughty, levelled to the ground the insatiably rapacious and greedy.

But Thermidor was ripening a heavy harvest in the vineyards of the Ile-de-France. Conspiracy was to appear, spurred by the energy of despair, and hands "full of rapine" were about to stifle on those thin lips the last cry of outraged and revolted French reason. Everything was then over with Republican virtue.

When his head fell, somewhere, in an obscure, far-away village, an unknown woman tore her breast with desperate nails and gave lamentable utterance to the

plaint which will re-echo through the centuries and the ages :

“ There’s no more hope for the people ! They have killed God ! ”

## II. A SÉANCE AT ARRAS

IN 1830 Charles Reybaud published at Brussels the “ *Mémoires authentiques de Maximilien de Robespierre.* ” These were apocryphal memoirs, certainly, but that does not mean that they are inaccurate. Charles Reybaud’s book does not contain only empty declamations, but also details of interest, among which must be counted the description of a séance of magnetism at Arras which we reproduce here.

“ A German doctor has come amongst us, possessing a wonderful secret which struck all the curious with amaze ; this was Mesmer, the discoverer of animal magnetism, a man divine in the eyes of some, an arrant impostor in the eyes of others, who by means of his magic made the powerless walk, restored the deaf to hearing, sight to the blind. The factitious state into which he used to throw his patients worked a complete renovation in them, brought to light the first cause of the evil, destroyed it and only left them when radically cured. That was what Fame bruited about throughout France about Mesmer’s cures.

Without lending entire faith to all those marvels, I<sup>1</sup> could not help feeling a certain enthusiasm which time and experience have not done away with. I understood also what a powerful interest the Faculty would have in

<sup>1</sup> Robespierre.



hounding down a system which was ruining from top to bottom the whole scaffolding of medical science. Accordingly my sympathies and prepossessions tended towards my giving it a favourable reception.

It was not by any means necessary to be a doctor in order to be interested actively in the great discovery of the day, everybody dabbled in it, and our little club only followed the fashion in devoting some evenings to it. Our friend, the advocate B——, who had just come from Paris where he had seen Mesmer at work, initiated us into the mystery of his passes. Carnot, Ruzé, Fosseux and all the members of our association made attempts that came to nothing. I wanted to try in my turn ; but wishing first of all to make a test for myself, I took no witness.

At that time I used to see rather frequently a young girl called Suzanne F—— ;<sup>1</sup> we were simply boy-and-girl friends together like many young people, at any rate I thought so, and so far as I am concerned I was not mistaken. The innocent familiarity which had sprung up between us and which her mother never tried to break off in any way, used to allow of my remaining sometimes alone with her ; she was lively and quick-brained.

We had often talked of magnetism ; the idea of a curative method which should become a universal panacea, was pleasing to her bold young imagination. I profited by her enthusiasm to propose an experiment on herself ; my request seemed to astonish her ; she stared fixedly at me, reddened, then gazed about her and made me a sign to show she agreed.

I immediately set about the business, assumed the

<sup>1</sup> Suzanne Forber, whom a silly legend represents as being one of Maximilien de Robespierre's mistresses at Arras.

tone of a doctor, waved my hands before her arms and face without touching them ; I fixed my eyes on her beautiful blue eyes ; I then saw her gradually becoming troubled, she moved her arms like a person who is about to be overpowered by sleep, her head next began bending and she fell asleep.

I then had an astounding scene with her. My friends have never heard a word about it. . . . No, I shall not relate it, it is Robespierre's secret, and it must die with him. All I can say is that someone having opened the door she uttered a cry, woke up, fainted away in violent convulsions.

I asked her when she was better about it ; she did not remember a single word of what she had said during her slumber. All the impression that had been left to her was that of the indefinable uneasiness which she had felt on recovering her senses. The rest was to her more fleeting than a dream, she had not kept the least trace of it.

For several days the memory of that evening left me no peace. I went to Suzanne's, and the only question I had to put to her was : ' What ! you don't remember ? ' ' No,' was all she replied, then she again reddened and looked at me.

I wanted to renew the experiment, she obstinately refused. I understood her modesty had taken alarm, and she was afraid to give way to too tender a feeling for her magnetiser. I abstained from asking her again, I did not try for a fresh opportunity to practise my art, and I retained within me all Suzanne's words. If I had been able at first to disdain them, my entire life would have taught me to put faith in them."

## III. ROBESPIERRE'S FALL DESCRIBED BY A PRISONER IN THE LUXEMBOURG

*Extract from the "Essais historiques," by C.-F. Beaulieu.*

"At half-past seven precisely a newspaper hawker (it was the only one we heard) passed into the garden and in a stentorian voice shouted some words which I shall report textually. Those who heard them like myself, who even ran up to hear them, will perhaps not be sorry that I recall them to their memory. As to the majority of readers, they will receive from this an idea of the principles of morality which the Revolutionaries wanted to impress on the people, to whom they never ceased talking about morals and virtue; for assuredly the hawker did not come and make such declarations without being authorised, without having got the order to do so. Here is what he said:

'This is the order and progression of all the ceremonies which were observed to-day at the Barrière-Renversée.<sup>1</sup> This is the list of winners in the lottery of the very sainted guillotine. Who wishes to see the list? To-day there are sixty of them, more or less.'

There was no doubt that the man who came and shouted like that in a place where nobody could buy of him was an emissary sent by our executioners to keep our alarms alive; for there was nobody under our windows, everyone kept away from them through fear. Still, they noticed some words in his cries which were a

<sup>1</sup> "The Barrière du Trône, Faubourg Saint-Antoine; the notion was to spread fright among the undocile inhabitants of that part of Paris, as in the rest of the capital, by making them in their turn spectators of the butchery." (Beaulieu.)



biting criticism of the conduct of the Revolutionary chiefs. How, said we, can they order it to be shouted out that the sentences of their Tribunal are merely a lottery? It could only be explained by assuming that one of the parties, in order to bring odium on the one which it was trying to oust, was already scheming to cast upon the other the blame<sup>1</sup> for the mass of crimes which was common to all.

After listening to this savage crier we withdrew from the windows; basing yet some hope on the stupidity of our tyrants, we had no longer anything to look forward to from their politics.

Finally, on 9 Thermidor, Year II (27th July, 1794),<sup>2</sup> between 6 and 7 p.m., some prisoners who occupied the rooms right at the top come and tell us the alarm-bell is being rung in the town-hall; upon this news everybody listens attentively and actually hears the piercing sounds of the bell as well as the noise of the fire-drums being beaten on every side.

We all stare at each other; we are not long in taking in the situation, the concierge and his most trusted wicket-keepers go the round of the house; the anxiety which is despite themselves depicted on their faces, the more humane, even courteous air which they pretend to assume, make us suspect some great event which is destined to destroy the power of their masters. We next consider the attitude of the spies ('*moutons*')<sup>3</sup> recognised

<sup>1</sup> These were, indeed, the tactics observed by Robespierre's enemies to bring him into disrepute and ruin him, in public opinion, by a reputation for bloody barbarity and cruelty.

<sup>2</sup> It is well known that on this day the party afterwards called the Thermidorians attacked Robespierre in the Convention and brought about his fall, which was next day followed by his execution.

<sup>3</sup> Persons set in the prisons to spy upon the arrested and report their talk.

as such ; and it is not hard to notice that worry and fear have been substituted in their souls for the impertinence, the boldness with which they used to treat us.

Our observations leave us in no manner of doubt that either we are all about to have our throats cut immediately, or else the Revolution by a retrograde movement is about to change our destiny and bring France under a new system. In spite of the uncertainty we desire the din to continue, all of us being persuaded that in our present extremity we can only escape death by an extraordinary crisis, and that crisis appears to be about to occur ; it is true that we may all perish in it ; but our alternatives are either the fearful tortures of September or freedom ; that is to us the significance of the dread sounds of the alarm-bell and the dull noise of the fire-drums, which are unceasing.

Each of us settles upon the articles of furniture he can break up so as to metamorphose them into weapons in case of invasion and defend his life for a moment ; some plan to fill their pockets with cinders to be thrown in the eyes of the murderers when they come to seize us, so as to be in a position to deal their blows more assuredly and to escape under cover of the resulting confusion.

Notwithstanding the doorkeeper and his wicket-keepers, who begin to be disconcerted, several of the arrested climb on to the roofs of the château in an endeavour to find out what is happening in the town ; they come and tell us a countless multitude is covering the Rue de Tournon ;<sup>1</sup> that they perceive in the middle of it a carriage escorted by ten or twelve gendarmes advancing slowly towards the prison ; they inform us at

<sup>1</sup> " This street abuts upon the principal gate of the Luxembourg." (Note by Beaulieu.)

the same time that the crowd are rending the welkin with applause ; doubtless some personage of the highest importance is shut up in the carriage, he cannot belong to the class of those who cut throats on 2nd September ; arrests of that kind are, in the present circumstances of the Republic, too little the subject of remark to inspire such a movement. Therefore it must be one of the party heads at whom the people are staring.

The vehicle stops at the gate of the prison ; the personage is made to enter ; we learn it is Robespierre ; despite our troublous state curiosity overcomes us and each of us wishes to try and catch sight of the tyrant who yet is well known to most of us ; but our expectation is deceived. The cobbler Willstrich was then at the Luxembourg, the inspection of which was delegated to him as a municipal officer ; he refuses to receive Robespierre and orders him to be conducted to the town-hall, that is to say among his most determined partisans.<sup>1</sup> The gendarmes obey. Robespierre departs, we hear no more noise around the prison, calm is restored somewhat within it, and reviving hope begins to disperse alarm.

We heard reassuring proclamations during the night ; everybody went to sleep.

Next day, as soon as morning came, certain news spread rapidly ; every face changed expression ; the conformity of feelings which circumstances thus developed brought together people whom a common

<sup>1</sup> " This cobbler had achieved a master-stroke : he gave the Council of the Commune a terrible leader, who still had innumerable followers among the populace. The National Convention would have been done for, or at least all Robespierre's foes would have been wiped out, if all the Revolutionaries of his party had behaved with as much intelligence as the cobbler Willstrich." (Note by Beaulieu.)





DEATH MASK OF ROBESPIERRE



fear had separated from one another; we did not yet dare utter out loud everything we thought; but we shook hands and whispered among ourselves: 'He is dead.'

Some of the arrested, however, pitied Robespierre, in whom they believed they had a protector."

#### IV. THE LAST OF ROBESPIERRE

IN the Madeleine Cemetery most of the bodies of Sanson's victims were speedily destroyed by the quicklime which the municipals of Paris had caused to be prepared in the pit into which the bodies of the victims were hurled.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Memoirs of Barras, however, the last of all the condemned who filled and closed up the deeply dug hole, were no others than Robespierre himself and some members of the Paris Commune.<sup>2</sup> Owing to the preference accorded to the chiefs even on the scaffold, Robespierre was quite certainly the last one executed.

"He was so by my orders," Barras continues; "it was I who commanded that he should be taken to the Place de la Révolution, and when his affair was over he should be thrown into the same grave as Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette in the Madeleine cemetery. I wanted in this

<sup>1</sup> The guillotined were buried in the Madeleine cemetery from August, 1792, to 24th March, 1794. They were afterwards taken to the Mousseaux, also called the Errancis, cemetery.

<sup>2</sup> A blunder is evident. Robespierre was not buried on 10 Thermidor in the Madeleine, which had been closed five months, but certainly at the Errancis, where there was no lack of space, and which had only been deserted because of its distance from the places of executions. The transport of the corpses on 10 Thermidor cost 193 livres. The grave-diggers got a gratuity of 7 livres.



way to give Robespierre a certain approximation to royalty because he was accused of having been disposed to it during the last moments of his power. Everyone knows also that Robespierre was the only person of this period who had been executed and thrown into the Madeleine cemetery, who wore buckles on his breeches and on his shoes ; and as, I believe, a question has been raised about some trinkets of that kind among the things which were gathered together at the exhumation of the bodies of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette, since it is true that after Robespierre's death only some members of the Commune were interred there, it appears extremely probable that it was Robespierre himself with his buckles who was taken for the august victims : you have therefore buried at Saint-Denis no other than Robespierre, with a few scattered bones of Saint-Just, Couthon or Hanriot, his companions in punishment. . . ."

## THE MARSEILLAISE

DURING the night of 24th to 25th April, 1792, the din of war filled the streets of Strasburg. Along narrow, steep roads, in stony lanes, rolled pieces of cannon shaking on their supports, convoys of baggage, commissariat vehicles, accompanied by wearied troops, battalions covered with the dust of the long roads they had traversed, whom France was about to hurl on to the Rhine against the Austrian foe.

Standing at the edge of a pavement, keeping clear of the tall wheels of the caissons, and thrust back by the masses of people along the illuminated houses, an officer of small stature, with his pigtail dressed *à la Prussienne*, and the skirts of his coat turned back over high boots, was looking on at the defiling before him of that enormous crowd of miserable, ragged, epic warriors. They kept on descending through the open gates of the town, bearing the news of the war declared against Austria on April 20th.

The young officer, named Rouget, whose father was a solicitor at Lons-le-Saulnier, had known the news already an hour ago. It had been brought by an orderly to the supper-table of the Mayor, Baron Fritz de Dietrich. The fat goose had remained half-finished under the cook's despairing eye. The whole company, men and women, had risen and made a dash for the document that had come from Paris. And outside could be heard the awe-inspiring tramping of the army on its march.

Suddenly somebody said :

"We can't make war without a song!"

"Come, Monsieur Rouget," put in Dietrich, "you're said to be a poet, a musician too. It's your duty to give us the song."

The young officer had stammered a few words of excuse. The eyes of the Mayor's young daughters were turned upon him. He promised, took up his hat and went into the street.

The army of the Republic was marching along. With the din, with the sight of the troops, the wing of Genius touched the soul of the unknown officer. His brain in a fever, he returned to his rooms in the Rue de la Mésange, took down his violin, the friend of hours of melancholy and loneliness, struck a note with his bow:

"Allons, enfants de la Patrie,  
Le jour de gloire est arrivé! . . ."

On the wings of song rose the universally triumphant "Marseillaise," whilst outside in the night the army was drawing its battalions, dragging its cannon through Strasburg. Next day France had her war-song.

Popular imagination has made the scene famous; Rouget, standing beside the clavichord, is intoning the hymn; ardent eyes are fixed upon the singer and the air seems to echo the beating of victory's wings.

On 25th April Marshal Luckner, Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Rhine, received the song, the army bands learnt it, the newspapers published it, and it entered Paris on the lips of the Marseillaise. The officer became immortal, France invincible.

After uttering this magnificent national cry, the voice of citizen-officer Rouget remained dumb for ever. In 1796 he published some "Essais en vers et en prose."



Prosody has never produced anything more utterly lamentable.

The great inspiration of '92 had died away in his too frail breast. The excessive greatness of the song had killed the too-weak poet. The hymn remained, the officer vanished into obscurity.

It is known that his life sagged out in mediocrity and sadness. The chance sale of some old papers<sup>1</sup> has yielded me some details of his private life, which, little known, ended obscurely at Choisy-le-Roi in 1836.

They consist of bills for items of clothing sent in to Rouget de Lisle in Years IX and X. Musmont, a dealer in various kinds of cloth, table and household linen, napkins, shirts, men's and women's underclothing, supplied him with ready-made muslin cravats at 18 francs apiece. The officer's account in three of the bills amounts altogether to 1961 francs. He settles it with four notes. He has his breeches cleaned and repaired at Roze's "Au Gant d'Or." His toilette, if we may judge by two tailors' invoices, seems to have been quite fashionable and elegant. From Brumaire, Year X, to Nivôse, Year XI, that is to say in less than three months he spent more than 2000 francs, now on cashmeres and quilted nankeens, now on royal-blue Louviers cloth and baize. Such luxury doubtless caused him some financial embarrassment, for the same bundle of papers contains accounts of expenses and interest for goods which he signed and did not pay.

These old papers of former days, souvenirs of great things that are past! From their yellowed, frayed leaves, so long buried in shut drawers, breathes the faint perfume of things dead and vanished. As we turn over the leaves

<sup>1</sup> The late M. Paul Dablin's collection.

we see before us the scene on the night of April, 1792, the room in the hotel with the young man and the violin ; and we feel on our foreheads the air stirred by the wings of the battle-song composed by the blushing officer whose creditors had not been paid !

## THE LEGEND OF THE GLASS OF BLOOD

WHEN you go down into the funeral vault of the Governors at the Invalides you encounter in the dark gallery, where the heroes of the Revolutionary and Imperial epic sleep, the Bessières, the Jourdans, the Monceys, the Grouchys, the Oudinots ; you light upon a black marble urn on which you read the name :

MME. DE VILLELUME, NÉE DE SOMBREUIL

The old Invalide guiding you, lantern in hand, tries to explain to you that Mme. de Sombreuil, in order to save her father, the Governor of the Invalides, from the September massacres, drank a glass of blood handed her by the murderers at the prison of L'Abbaye, and by that heroic and repellent deed she preserved the old man's life.

Women never fail to be moved, to wipe away a tear, when they hear the sinister and touching tale, and even men do not ponder without sadness the young woman's horrible self-sacrifice, the wonderful example of filial piety.

Alas ! This is another legend that must be destroyed ! Under the Restoration it furnished a pretext for pathetic and blaspheming odes, as witness the one consecrated to it by Victor Hugo, to whom historic truth was the least of worries. What then exactly happened on that terrible 4th September which carried Mlle. de Sombreuil's name to deathlessness ?

François-Joseph Virot, Marquis de Sombreuil, had been



promoted from brigadier-general at Lille to the governorship of the Hôtel Royal des Invalides in Paris. His faithfulness to the monarch had set him at variance with many of the pensioners, who were partisans of growing liberty. However, no serious incident had interrupted his duties when the outbreak of 10th August, 1792, occurred. He was arrested and transferred to the Abbaye, and the red month of September found him there with his daughter. The wave of panic which passed over Paris at the approach of the foreign armies hurled the mob against the prisons, and that spark set light to the fearful conflagration that followed.

A popular tribunal was formed at the Abbaye under the presidency of Maillard. The prisoners appeared in turn before him and those who seemed guilty to the judges heard the words :

“ To La Force ! ”

At the prison of La Force, where massacres were going on at that very hour, the formula was the same. The guilty were dismissed with the phrase :

“ To L'Abbaye ! ”

It was nothing but a hideous trap. At the Abbaye the condemned was at once pushed into the Rue Sainte-Marguerite<sup>1</sup> and was felled by blows from sabres, knives, and hatchets, atrocious ministers of justice. Whilst the last screams of agony were dying away, whilst the cry of anguish was expiring on the victim's lips, Judge Maillard in calm and deliberate handwriting would note on the prison registry in regard to the name :

“ Judged and put to death by the people.”

The innocent—or those recognised as such—were on

<sup>1</sup> The Rue Sainte-Marguerite was situated on the spot now occupied by the Rue Gozlin, at Saint-Germain des Prés.



ROUGET DE LISLE  
Author of the "Marseillaise"





the other hand led to the prison threshold by two judges and presented to the people as persecuted patriots.

Amid congratulations, embraces, applause, they were conducted back to their homes by an escort carrying them in delirious triumph. Others, like the Abbé Sicard, the teacher of the deaf and dumb, escaped death owing to a decree of the Assembly, which was greatly moved by his appeal of distress despatched on a sheet of paper stained with the blood of the murdered victims.

After very many others the name of Sombreuil was called, and the old man entered, accompanied by his daughter. The touching spectacle would certainly not have entirely won the case for the Governor of the Invalides, but he found an obscure defender among the spectators, a man called Grappin, who had come to claim certain prisoners in the name of the Contrat-Social section. Mlle. de Sombreuil, encircling her father with her arms, was imploring the inflexible judges, who were dumbfounded in the presence of the tears streaming down a beautiful face, the appeals to their hearts, to their pity, stirred perhaps gradually by her outcries, which were such as Theban Antigone might have uttered in defence of old Oedipus.

Then it was that Grappin intervened, as he had on behalf of several accused, who were quite amazed to discover a disinterested advocate of their case in the uniform of the National Guard. Grappin's defence was especially intended to gain time. Was it not necessary to know the opinion of the Invalides about the Governor's civism? Was he among the people's foes on 10th August? All these reasons decided the improvised tribunal to send him with some assistants to the Invalides in order to make a quick inquiry. The night is already far advanced; the district is slumbering in the terrifying silence that

follows great popular explosions. Suddenly the drum awakens echoes in the old courtyards. It is Grappin beating up the old soldiers. Pale morning is rising over roofs damp with dew. The courtyard is full of noise, of outcry.

Grappin sets forth the Governor's position, entreats the Invalides to grant him the certificate of civism which would save his life. But the old soldiers, whom the Royalist Governor wounded in their dearest hopes, to whom he denied the right to be Republicans and to rise to the great, sturdy appeal of Liberty, have a rankling animosity against Sombreuil for his past conduct, and they rise up against him as accusers. There is no way of inducing them to change their minds. Grappin then knows that a lie alone can save the Governor. He leaves the court of the Invalides and returns to the prison of L'Abbaye. It is eleven o'clock. The old man and his daughter are waiting. She has not stopped crying, conjuring, praying, supplicating. The sombre, ugly passages have been resounding with her heart-breaking laments. She is waiting. The people are waiting. Maillard is waiting.

At last Grappin arrives.

" Well ? " asks Maillard.

Then Grappin speaks, extolling Sombreuil's true civism ; he lies ; he goes on talking, quotes the Invalides' favourable opinion ; he lies ; he continues talking, warmly, fervently, he wants to save an innocent head ; he lies.

The crowd seem to approve him, to ratify his words. Mlle. de Sombreuil's suppliant beauty has penetrated their hearts with an instinctive pity, and when Grappin stops, Maillard, raising his head, consulting the meeting with a glance, utters the words :

"Whether innocent or guilty, I believe it would be unworthy of the people to dip its hands in this old man's blood."

"Yes! yes!" is the cry on all sides.

Maillard calmly writes in the prison register :

"Release him."

Sombreuil and his daughter are led to the gate, and Grappin shouts to the people :

"Here is a splendid officer! He is a good family father!"

And a triumphal escort conducts the acquitted back to the old war-mansion where the equestrian statue of "Ludovicus Magnus" watches motionless in stone.

. . . . .

And the tumbler of blood? you ask.

I look for it in vain. The above account is drawn from the hundreds of pamphlets or reports which were published concerning the September massacres at the time when they took place. Nowhere, as you will notice, nowhere is the slightest mention of the glass of blood which is supposed to have been drunk by Mlle. de Sombreuil to save her father's life.

The Royalist pamphlets, although they so readily tend to exaggerate and amplify the least of the bloody actions of the Revolution, do not speak about it, and the Republican brochures are equally silent.

But every legend has its origin. So let us go to the source of this one and see if it rests on a serious basis, although the absence of any document from 1792 to 1800 throws grave suspicion on its veracity, supposing its origin may be discovered.

The "Mérite des Femmes," published in 1801, first



mentions it in a note which afterwards served as a foundation for all the accounts that gave the legend of the tumbler of blood. So there is the source of it. Its value may be seriously disputed ; and Mlle. de Sombreuil herself is the measure by which its importance is fixed. Where and when did she ever speak of the glass of blood ? It seems clear that this was a legend that arose on the morrow of the Terror, at the time of the reaction against the fallen régime, when the most dubious stories and testimonies, the most barefaced lies, were credited and authorised without investigation.

The subject was truly too beautiful, too pathetic, to be passed over in silence ; it stigmatised with the fearful eloquence of facts those " blood-drinkers " of '93 who wanted to compel their victims to share their tastes, those odious " Septembriseurs," those " tigers," those " murderers," whence all the evil came.

The most unexpected and extravagant variants were added to embellish the legend. In one case, a glass of water was handed to Mlle. de Sombreuil, who was in a state of exhaustion, and a drop of blood fell into it by inadvertence ; in another case, it was simply water coloured red ; whilst yet in another it is deliberately stated that the blood was that of a person massacred the previous night. We may therefore boldly conclude that the story is a falsehood, that Mlle. de Sombreuil was not obliged to drink a glass of blood for the very simple reason that it was neither proposed to her nor imposed on her.

At any rate, the heroic attitude of the Governor's daughter before the popular tribunal of the Abbaye would only have saved his life for the moment. A graver charge was brought against him, the charge which sent a large number of French people to the scaffold : he had a son

who was one of the *émigrés*. On 29 Prairial, Year II (17th June, 1794), the Governor of the Invalides appeared before the Revolutionary Tribunal, which did not allow itself to be moved. His white head fell on the same day.

The fate of his sons was not less tragic.

The eldest, Charles Virot de Sombreuil, had gone through the campaign of 1793 in the regiment of Salm Hussars in Condé's army. Forty-eight hours before the battle he disembarked at Quiberon; it was the very moment when the first Republican bullets began to fall. Being made prisoner, he was taken to Lorient to be judged by a military commission; he was afterwards transferred to Vannes and there condemned to death. He refused to let his eyes be bandaged, himself gave the order to fire, and died, "lamented," says one of his biographers, "by all the Republicans around him."

The last days of Stanislas de Sombreuil were involved in greater romance and lesser heroism. Under the Terror he was suspected and sent to the Force prison. He very often received there a visit from a graceful, pretty woman who was his mistress. Doubtless she loved him tenderly, as people used to love at that period, when life had to be lived quickly, when people had to enjoy every pleasure they could muster as rapidly as possible, at any cost. At one of the visits his mistress found him with chattering teeth, struck down by a violent fever. Love gave her ingenuity. Dressed in her lover's clothes, she remained three days and three nights tending him, eager to save the life which was soon to be sacrificed at the scaffold. Included together with his father in the batch of "red-shirts," mixed up with the conspirators who were or were not accomplices in the attempt at assassinating Collot d'Herbois and Robespierre, they both

on the same day met in the common grave of the Sainte-Marguerite cemetery.

Mlle. de Sombreuil survived the disasters of her family for several years. She was imprisoned till Thermidor, when she owed her freedom to the triumph of the Thermidorian plot. She hastened to leave a country where three persons equally dear to her had been executed. She married the Count de Villelume, returned to France under the Consulate, and followed her husband to the Hôtel des Invalides at Avignon, of which he was Governor. She died there in 1823, and her heart was preserved there until the suppression of the establishment. By a ministerial decree of 1851 the funeral urn was transported to the vaults of the Invalides in Paris, where, among the hearts of Generals Eblé, Baraguay d'Hilliers, d'Hautpoul, Bisson, Conchy, Kléber, de Négrier, and Vauban, it receives the homage of sentimental tears accorded to a false legend.



## “NOTRE-DAME-DE-SAINTE- GUILLOTINE”

### I. ALEXANDRE DE BEAUHARNAIS

ABOUT the end of December, 1793, a dark young woman of supple figure, walking languorously in trailing drapery, went and knocked at the glass window of the doorkeeper at No. 1446, Rue Saint-Honoré.

“Is the Citizen Vadier<sup>1</sup> at home?” she asked.

“Go up,” said the man, “it’s the first floor above the entresol.”

The visitor climbed the dark, narrow staircase leading to the next floor, passed by the dark entresol and stopped before the low door of the chambers of the Citizen Vadier, President of the Committee of General Safety. After knocking and waiting a few moments, listening for any noise in the room behind the obstinately shut door, she tried again. A muffled footstep glided into the ante-room, and the door opening revealed the commonplace, indifferent face of a servant-woman.

Once more the elegant visitor put the question :

<sup>1</sup> Vadier, Deputy for the Ariège Department in the National Convention, was one of the most fiery and most violent Jacobins. He voted for the King’s death and all the measures of the Terror. An enemy of Danton, he used to say of him : “We are going to empty that fat, stuffed turbot!” and he was one of his chief accusers, as he was also that of Robespierre, whose fall, on 9 Thermidor, is largely attributable to him. Being banished from France as a regicide at the Restoration, he died in exile at Brussels on 14th December, 1828. The slab on his grave in the Ixelles cemetery says : “He sacrificed himself for his country and for liberty.”

"Is the Citizen Vadier at home?"

"What do you want with him?" asked the servant.

"It concerns the affair of my husband, General——"

But a piercing, harsh voice made itself heard at the further end of another room:

"What is it, Jeanneton?"

"It's about an affair——" began the servant, still keeping the door half-shut.

"What name?" queried the voice at a distance.

"The Citizeness de Beauharnais," replied the visitor.

And the voice of the invisible Vadier curtly cut the interview short with:

"I am not at home. Shut the door, Jeanneton."

With a swift glance round the Citizeness Beauharnais had caught sight of the bare, poor-looking room whence came the voice of the man who presided over the terrible Committee.

In a curtainless alcove there was a plain bed with a meagre mattress, a chest of drawers between the window and the fireplace, an ordinary desk, some straw chairs. In that wretched, bare room lived Vadier. The door was closed; the petitioner found herself again on the landing, amid the chill and damp exuding from the old walls. She gathered about her the folds of her cloak and went away resigned, without a murmur.

Next day she returned; she came again two or three times. The Conventional's door remained shut. Understanding then that she would never get near him she slipped a note under the door at her last visit. And still hopeful she crossed the Tuileries and arrived at the Rue du Bac so as to await in her solitary lodging, 43 Rue Saint-Dominique, an answer that never came.

Here is the letter to Vadier:

“ Paris, 28 Nivôse, Year II of the Republic One and Indivisible.

“ LIBERTY-EQUALITY.

“ La Pagerie-Beauharnais,<sup>1</sup> to Vadier, Representative of the People, greeting, esteem, confidence, fraternity.

“ As it is impossible to see you I trust you will be so good as to read the memoir I enclose. Your colleague<sup>2</sup> has informed me of your severity, but at the same time has told me of your honest and virtuous patriotism, and that, despite your doubts about the civism of the aristocrats, you always interested yourself in the unhappy victims of error. I am persuaded that after reading the memoir your humanity and justice will bring you to take into consideration the position of a wife who is altogether unfortunate, but only in having belonged to the family of an enemy of the Republic, the elder Beauharnais, whom you know, and who, in the Constituent Assembly, was opposed to Alexandre, your colleague and my husband. I should regret much if you confused in your mind Alexandre with Beauharnais the elder.<sup>3</sup> I put myself in your place ; you must doubt the patriotism of all the nobles, but it is within possibility that there are

<sup>1</sup> She who was destined later to become the Empress Joséphine was born 24th June, 1761. Her father, Tascher de la Pagerie, occupied an enviable position in Martinique. Joséphine was very young when she married Alexandre de Beauharnais, who was created a General at the Revolution.

<sup>2</sup> No doubt one of Vadier's colleagues in the Convention. Was it perhaps Barras whom Joséphine knew ? We do not know.

<sup>3</sup> François de Beauharnais, Deputy in the States-General like his brother Alexandre. He was one of the most Royalist members of the Assembly and emigrated in 1791. Returning to France under the Consulate, he was, thanks to Joséphine, created successively Ambassador to Etruria, Senator, Ambassador to Spain and a Peer of France.



among them some ardent friends of liberty, of equality. Alexandre never deviated from those principles; he always walked in that same direction. Had he not been a Republican, he would have enjoyed neither my esteem nor my friendship. I am an American and only know him in the family. . . .

"Do not confuse him with your former colleague (F. Beauharnais, the *émigré*), I believe he is worthy of your respect. In spite of your refusal, I applaud your severity so far as I am myself concerned, but I cannot applaud your suspicion of my husband. My household is a Republican household. Before the Revolution my children were not distinguished from the sansculottes, and I hope they will be worthy of the Republic. I write to you frankly as a sansculotte of the Mountain. . . . If I have been deceived in the account given me of his situation (her husband's) and it might be or might appear to you suspicious, I beg you to pay no attention to what I say, for like you I am inexorable. You can see that your colleague has informed me of all you told him; he, like you, had doubts, but noticing that I lived only with Republicans he ceased doubting. You would also be just, you would cease doubting if you had desired to hear me. Farewell, estimable citizen; you have my entire confidence.

" LA PAGERIE-BEAUHARNAIS.

" 43 Rue Saint-Dominique, Faubourg Saint-Germain."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Alex. Sorel in "L'Histoire de la prison des Carmes sous la Terreur." The present notes about Vadier's home and Joséphine's manoeuvres have followed the facts of the little-known documents published by M. Albert Tournier in his book: "La Président du Comité de Sûreté générale sous la Terreur: Vadier," Paris, Flammarion.

What crime had been committed by the husband of this lady who thus interceded for him as a “sansculotte of the Mountain”? What capital charge was hanging over his suspected head which she was attempting to rebut in the Revolutionary Tribunal?

The former Viscount Alexandre de Beauharnais, ex-Deputy for the bailey of Blois in the States-General, had been nominated head of the Army of the Rhine in May, 1793. The portfolio of War had been offered him shortly after. Having refused it he found himself included in the decree which removed all nobles from military positions. He left the Army of the Rhine and went and established himself at La Ferté-Imbault in the Loir-et-Cher Department. He was then so imprudent as to reply to a denunciation. His name was recalled to the memory of the men who were purging the Republic. He was arrested and cast into the Carmes prison, that gloomy building which even to-day raises its black walls in the Rue de Vaugirard, in the middle of the tragic orchard reddened by the blood of September.

We have observed how his wife tried everything to save him, even to going and attempting to confront the savage Vadier, who was then all-powerful without making himself noticeable in his acts or words. Secretly he manipulated all the mysterious threads of the redoubtable Committee of Public Safety whence issued the thunderbolts of the Terror. But he was inflexible, severe, implacable. Never having received the Citizeness Beauharnais he thought it useless to answer her and to intervene in favour of the aristocrat General. That prey did not escape the Revolutionary Tribunal. On 4 Thermidor, Year II (23rd July, 1794), six days before the execution of Robespierre, Beauharnais wrote his last

letter to Joséphine,<sup>1</sup> dating it "The 4th Thermidor, the Year II of the Republic one and indivisible."

"The kind of interrogatories administered to-day," he writes, "to a considerably large number of the detained point unquestionably to the fact that I am the victim of the scoundrelly calumnies of several aristocrats, so-called patriots, in this house. The presumption that this hellish machination will follow me even to the Revolutionary Tribunal leaves me no hope of seeing you again, my friend, nor of kissing my dear children.<sup>2</sup> I shall not speak to you of my regrets; my tender affection for them, the brotherly attachment which binds me to you cannot leave you in any doubt as to the feelings with which I shall leave life in these circumstances. I am equally sorry to be separated from a country I love, for which I should have liked to give my life a thousand times, and which I not only shall be unable to serve any more, but which will see me passing from it whilst thinking I am a bad citizen.

"This heartrending thought forbids me not to commend to you the preservation of my memory; work at rehabilitating it, proving that a whole life devoted to the service of my country and to the triumph of liberty and equality ought in the people's eyes to be a crushing rebuff to hateful calumniators, who were particularly found in the class of suspected persons. This task should be put off till later, because in the storms of Revolution a great people which is fighting to pulverise its fetters should

<sup>1</sup> Joséphine by this time had herself been imprisoned in the same prison as her husband. She was released a month later.

<sup>2</sup> Eugène de Beauharnais, who became Viceroy of Italy; Hortense, who became Queen of Holland and was the mother of Napoleon III.



environ itself with a proper mistrust and fear rather to forget a guilty one than to strike down an innocent.

“ I shall die with the calmness which yet allows me to soften with feelings of dearest affection, but with the courage which characterises a free man, a pure conscience and a honest soul, whose most fervid prayers are for the prosperity of the Republic.

“ Good-bye, my friend, console yourself through my children, console them by enlightening them, and especially by teaching them that by dint of their virtues and good civism they ought to efface the memory of my punishment and recall my services and my title to the national gratitude. Good-bye, you know those I love, be their comforter and prolong my life in their hearts by your kindnesses.

“ Good-bye, I embrace you close, as well as my dear children, to my bosom, for the last time in my life.

“ ALEXANDRE BEAUHARNAIS.”

On the following day he was sentenced to death.

Sanson took him to the Barrière du Trône-Renversé alive ; and transported him dead to Picpus, to the common pit where even to-day his bones lie.

And as for her, the “ sansculotte of the Mountain,” everyone knows what destiny had in store when she married Bonaparte just before 18 Brumaire. Her household then, like that of '93, was a Republican household, but the children no longer consorted with “ other sansculottes.” The one was fated to be Viceroy of Italy, the other was to place the crown of Holland on her head.

During that period Vadier, having regained his native land, belonged to the forgotten past. Perhaps on hearing of the fêtes and splendours of the Empire he smiled

bitterly when he thought of the petitioner whom he had so often refused to see at his gloomy lodgings in the Rue Saint-Honoré. And the servant Jeanneton, who had become Mme. Vadier, recalled maybe the languid, slender Creole, now adorned with a crown, in whose face she impertinently banged the door in the month of Nivôse, Year II.

When their talk turned upon Her Imperial Majesty, old Vadier must have stuck up his head and declared scornfully in tones harsh as the sound of a corncrake :

“ Yes—yes—I knew that sansculotte of the Mountain !——”

## II. CHABOT : THE CAPUCHIN AND SANSCULOTTE <sup>1</sup>

ON this bright, clear September evening a singular person is going up the Rue Saint-Honoré to the fraternal and friendly Société des Jacobins.

Although the open-breasted Revolutionary is in the order of the day at that period of the Terror, passers-by cannot help noticing the extreme disorder and raggedness

<sup>1</sup> “ Sansculottism ” was born in the Electoral Assembly of La Sainte-Chapelle, and the following was the occasion. An elector of the Observatory Section in the Faubourg Saint-Jacques, in attacking a quite constitutional proposal, expressed himself in terms no less improper than unmeasured. The speaker’s dress perfectly answered his language. Another elector, ashamed perhaps and wearied by his indecencies, stood up and said :

“ President, put a clapper on the mouth of this ‘ breechless ’ (sansculotte) fellow ! ”

As a matter of fact, the orator in question had on only a pair of trousers of shoddy cloth, the spots and holes in which showed neither care nor means. The phrase was enthusiastically welcomed by the Jacobins. Next day several of them who were usually dressed with elegance and fastidiousness appeared in trousers in the Electoral Assembly, where couplets were circulated in honour of “ Sansculottisme.” (From Abbé Georgel’s “ Mémoires.”)

of the man who, carrying a heavy cane, a stout cudgel, walks along the street, encircled by a few companions in like attire.

A shabby hat covers his shaggy, glossy, greasy hair ; he wears no breeches, but a pair of tattered trousers of tricoloured material ; not a coat, but a ragged, worn-out jacket, holey at the elbows. He walks barefoot in rustic clogs. His chest is bare, likewise his neck. He is the type of the real ragged sansculotte, epic in his dirtiness, both picturesque and repellent with his naked breast. He appears to command the band surrounding him, and he crosses the threshold of the Jacobins with perfect discipline, like a general at the head of his troops. He enters the hall, he is seen, and there are shouts :

“Vive Chabot !”

For that man is François Chabot,<sup>1</sup> once a Capuchin monk, now a representative of the people at the National Convention.

The secret of his popularity lies in his tatters.

This evening he has come to impart to his brothers and friends, the Jacobins, a big piece of news. The members whisper mysteriously in each other's ears, they mutter a certain name, when Chabot mounts the tribune at the President's invitation.

“I announce to the Society,” he says, “that I am going to marry.”

Ah ! Ah ! so that is the great news they were to expect!

<sup>1</sup> Chabot was born in 1759 at Saint-Genier in the Rouergue. His father was cook at the college of Rodez. Very intelligent, very ardent, François Chabot became a Capuchin. Owing to political events and the laws regarding monastic establishments he left the Church and threw himself into politics. Named Deputy for the Loir-et-Cher in the Legislative Assembly in September, 1791, he was one of the principal agitators who stirred up the people against the Court. In September, 1792, the Loir-et-Cher Department elected him Deputy to the Convention. He was guillotined with the Dantonists, 16 Germinal, Year II.



The Capuchin going to marry ! The women who attended the meetings of the brotherly Society founded by Olympe de Gouges lean over in the various tribunes. This was certainly not the least of the many surprises of the Revolution. They listen to Chabot.

“ You know I was once a priest, even a Capuchin,” he confesses ; “ I must therefore give you the reason for the resolution I have taken. As a legislator, I have always believed it was my duty to set an example of all the virtues. I am reproached with being fond of women ; I believe that calumny will be exorcised by my taking to myself a woman whom the law grants me and my heart has claimed for a long time.

“ Three weeks ago I did not know the woman I am about to marry. Being brought up, like the women of her country, in the strictest seclusion, she had been kept from the notice of strangers. I was therefore not in love with her. Even now I am only in love with her virtue, her talents, her wit and her patriotism ; on her side, the reputation of my patriotism had opened to me her heart’s secret. I was far from being an aspirant to her hand. I asked her hand of one of her brothers, Junius Frey, an estimable man of letters, well known by his two extremely patriotic works, ‘ L’Anti-Fédéraliste ’ and ‘ La Philosophie Sociale.’ I asked for her hand, not for myself, but for one of my relatives.

“ ‘ I intend her for you, for you alone, citizen,’ was Junius Frey’s answer.

“ I observed that my whole income was a Capuchin pension of 700 livres, which I left to my father and mother, the first aged 80, the other 85, who were both of them more patriotic, more energetic than myself, and had ruined themselves to give me an education.

“ ‘ That matters little,’ replied the worthy man ; ‘ we give her to you for yourself, and not for your fortune.’ ”

Doubtless the ex-Capuchin Chabot was heartiness itself in accepting Junius Frey’s gift ! He does not dwell on the subject, and goes on with great vehemence of speech ; it is now a question of making his brothers and friends swallow the 300,000 livres which constitute the dowry of the virtuous foreign lady.

“ I am being calumniated in this respect, citizens ; it has been insinuated that I possessed money, since I was making an advantageous marriage. I am going to read you my marriage contract ; you will then see in what my fortune consists. At the time of the Legislature in 1792 I bought furniture for 1500 livres, which, increasing in value through the fall in assignats, is estimated to be worth 2000 crowns. I am accordingly rich to the extent of a capital of 6000 livres.”

And the ex-Capuchin pulls a dirty piece of paper out of his tattered carmagnole jacket. It is the marriage contract into the secrets of which he is about to initiate the Jacobins. As, despite his haste in getting through the contract, the situation therein revealed does not resemble at all that of a hermit who has taken the vow of poverty, he hurries on to add, in hopes that the sauce will enable the fish to pass muster :

“ I now invite the Society to appoint a deputation to be present at my wedding and the civic banquet which will conclude it. I tell you beforehand that no priest shall pollute the bridals, and that we shall only employ the services of the municipality. Let the deputation be so good as to attend at 8 o’clock in the morning ; I want the whole business to be ended by 9, because I do not wish to absent myself from the National Convention ;

and my betrothed has told me she would cease loving me if that were the cause of my neglecting even once the Convention and the Jacobins."

A banquet and a marriage despatched in one hour! And at what an early hour! 8 o'clock! The ex-Capuchin did not make a point of keeping the Jacobins too long interested in this woman whose love was regulated by his political conduct.

Such a cavalier fashion of arranging things is not to the taste of all the members of the Society, and one of them, Citizen Dufourny, former President of the General Council of the Commune, mounts the tribune. He there protests energetically against Chabot's proposal, and his jeering malice is hardly sparing of the fiancée, and especially the dowry. He seems astonished to see a good patriot like Chabot select a foreigner for a spouse, when Frenchwomen are not lacking to fulfil that honourable state of life. Finally he fancies the Society's deputations are not intended to assist at banquets and weddings.

Chabot replies, but the reply appears superfluous and the success of the proposal seems assured. In spite of the morning hour, there are several who would much like to go to the wedding and share the sumptuousness of the rapid banquet. It is wrong of Citizen Dufourny to come and preach Lent, despite the Capuchin.

Chabot has no need to insist. Warm and unanimous applause greets the flowers of his fine rhetoric, of his Jacobin "Capuchinade."

He rubs his hands and smiles.

The 300,000 livres of dowry have passed.

Who was the mysterious fiancée whose "virtues, talents, wit and patriotism" had fascinated and be-



witched with love the son of the cook of Saint-Geniez-de-Ridevolt ?

The chronicle of scandal of the period had not yet touched Léopoldine Frey's reputation. It appears she was an elegant young woman with fine manners, fair as Austrians are, slender of build, plump, in fact very nice indeed, and a royal morsel for Chabot.

She lived with her two brothers, Emmanuel and Junius, who were once Barons, but at the moment (to believe their story) Austrian bankers ; in reality, they were tolerably unscrupulous political agents whose rôle has never been very exactly defined. At their house Chabot had met his bride from beyond the Rhine, and as he was not insensible to any woman's charms, those of Léopoldine Frey made a great impression on him.

The bankers were rich ; at any rate they lavished money about, the source of which nobody tried to guess. The table they kept was luxurious, the wines generous, the conversation pleasant. It is easy to imagine their effect on the man who was described as “ a good-looking fellow, agreeable and bold, a voluptuous gourmand of a monk, the type of the Epicurean Churchman, such as has formed the subject of mocking French satire since the *fabliaux*.”<sup>1</sup> To the two foreigners engaged in obscure financial operations, Chabot, a Deputy, an influential Jacobin, represented a guarantee, if not of the moral, at least of the political kind, a sort of shield behind which they were able to continue their ugly operations which were readily condoned because of their table, their wines and their sister.

The origin of Chabot's unexpected marriage must

<sup>1</sup> F. A. Aulard, “ Figures oubliées de la Révolution : Fabre d'Eglantine.” (*La nouvelle Revue*, Vol. XXXV, 1st July, 1885.)

certainly be sought in that direction. He could hardly expect it, with his scandalous reputation as a libertine. Once upon a time when he was the guardian of his monastery and still proclaimed a pious and edifying austerity from the housetops, he had indulged in the reading of publications of a somewhat questionable character which the dawn of the Revolution brought into being in wonderful profusion. Chabot, being of a hot, sensual nature, abandoned himself to it, and soon became a cause of shame to the monastery and a subject of perpetual scandals to the town.

The same thing happened when Grégoire, the Constitutional Bishop of Blois, attached him to himself as "grand vicaire." The sheep went mad, and as Representative of the Department of Loir-et-Cher, he attacked the Legislative Assembly, the Court and the Constitutional Party with a violence up to that time unparalleled. It was he who wanted a law fixing the price of bread throughout France at one sou the pound ; it was he who called "the Citizen Jesus Christ the first sansculotte in the world," and who, as an excuse for going about bare-chested, stigmatised citizens who were heedful of the proprieties with the epithet "muscadins" (dandies).

To return to his love-romance.

The accusation of loving every woman, against which he had defended himself at the Jacobin tribune, was far from being without foundation. When married he did not neglect extra-conjugal pleasures, and took as his mistress a woman called Descoings, whom he installed in small apartments in a quiet district. The connection lasted sixteen or seventeen months. But it would display very little knowledge of Chabot to imagine that one mistress and one lawful wife could satisfy his sensual

appetites and his amorous lewdness. Like a butterfly—rather dilapidated—he can be seen hovering and flying from heart to heart, and this sometimes involved annoyances.

His political career was nearing its close. His marriage with Léopoldine Frey had made him the accomplice of his brothers-in-law, who dragged him into their dubious schemes and their financial rascality. The scandal of the *Compagnie des Indes* and of the falsification of the Decree of the Convention suddenly came to light. One morning in November, 1793, in the pale light of dawn, Chabot was arrested as he got out of bed.

And lo and behold ! Chabot under lock and key in the Luxembourg prison. He there received a summons to appear on 18 Pluviôse, Year II (6th February, 1794), before the Civil Tribunal, at the instance of a young woman called Julie Conpry, better known by the more familiar name of Berger, who lived in the Rue Neuve-Saint-Roch. The woman alleged herself to be enceinte owing to the Capuchin, and her summons added one more name to the long love-list of Léopoldine's husband.

Chabot, by coming in contact with solicitors and barristers who had become members of the Convention, had acquired some legal knowledge and was acquainted with some legal tricks in use at the Palace of Justice. They did not help him at all that time. Arguing from the fact of his secret incarceration, he applied for a postponement of the trial, but the tribunal, with an irony which he doubtless scarcely grasped, called his attention to the fact that he might have himself represented as in a purely commercial transaction. Chabot persisting, lost the paternity case. He was condemned in default to take upon himself the child about to be born and to pay the



mother 1200 livres for her lying-in, and the judges left him free to choose between that verdict and an alternative allowing him to compound by paying 1000 livres pension for life.

Chabot did not consider himself beaten, and in his will he sped a Parthian arrow at that mistress who claimed to settle a difference in the Law Courts which he insisted upon regarding as purely amorous and sentimental.

"I disavow," he writes, "the son of Julie Berger, and I have more than one reason for it. However, I recommend my relations to look after his education till the age of fourteen. I recommend them particularly to take care of my very virtuous wife, and to comfort her in her awful widowhood. I have had weaknesses in my life, but the most disinterested philanthropy and respect for the claims of nature will yield me a pardon for some aberrations of my burning passions. I trust the Deity will be pleased to forget them and receive me in his bosom; I worship Him, despite all the new fanatics of atheism."

This gallant person became a Capuchin again in his last hours. Did his father, the worthy cook of the College of Rodez, take care of Julie Berger's son? Did he comfort "the very virtuous wife"? No one knows. Time has blotted out those distant and humbly resigned figures. What is certain is that the woman Berger was let in for the expenses of the lawsuit, because on 16 Germinal, two months later, Chabot, with his two brothers-in-law, mounted the cart conveying the Dantonists to their death.

### III. THE LAST CHARNEL-HOUSE

THE twenty-second day of Messidor was drawing to a close. Evening was falling, oppressive, dusty, still glow-

ing with the burning heat of the vanished sun. A beautiful July twilight wrapped the earth in a steamy mist. A sinister task was being concluded in this warm fog at the Place de la Barrière du Trône-Renversé, formerly the Place de Trône.

On that very day some more heads had fallen beneath the implacable steel of the Terror. Sanson was superintending from the height of the guillotine platform the cleansing operations. Bloodspots were removed from the planks with sponges and streams of water. One of the assistants, standing on the lever, detached the knife beaded with red drops, whilst his companions threw the headless bodies into a cart furnished with straw. The only sounds to be heard in the vast square were the mournful thud of corpses falling between the staff-sides, the oaths of the men and the continuous neighing of the horses excited by the smell of blood.

The Barrière du Trône-Renversé was deserted at this hour. The people who had come to witness the execution had long before dispersed towards the outskirts, returning to the town, where their supper awaited them. So the executioner's terrible job under the Terror was being finished in the silence of solitude.

Nevertheless, somebody was there in the square, hidden behind the bushes, at a distance from the satiated, weary guillotine. But twilight hid the person's outline; and besides—why should Sanson bother his head about it? He was in a hurry to end his task, to have done with it. Accordingly, at his command, the assistants made haste, as they dressed “Miss Guillotine” afresh for the morrow with a last pail of water, a last scrub with a sponge.

The carts, ranged alongside the platform, had received

their load. They started on their journey, escorted by a few gendarmes on horseback, whose duty was to save them from an imaginary abduction, which no one ever attempted during the Reign of Terror. The waggons which in their jolting left behind them blood-tracks as they moved along, turned into the secluded road going to Vincennes, which cut through the low-lying kitchen-garden ground in the east. The figure that was hiding in the square followed them, concealing itself in the shadows, heedful not to attract attention. It was a young, poorly clad woman, her face bathed in tears, suppressing her sobs—doubtless a relation of one of the victims among the day's batch. The carts did not travel a long space. The private road passed behind the convent of the nuns canonesses of Saint-Augustin, at the top of the village of Picpus. There they stopped.

Despite the darkness of the evening the place itself and the surrounding country could be distinguished in detail. There was a plank enclosure pierced by a gate passable for carts and behind was a wall. The wall was half demolished, hollowed through to its base by a big hole. On the further side of it was darkness, in which you could hear invisible herbage rustling in the gentle evening breeze.

On the arrival of the waggons pine torches and large tallow candles were lit, and the scene became clearly defined. Some men were waiting by the wall. They approached the carts, greeted the conductors, exchanged good-evenings with the gendarmes. Meanwhile the assistants, taking the horses by the bridle, backed them towards the hole in the wall. The carts were there brought to a stand. One of the men tipped up the first one. It quickly overset, and its bloody cargo fell with



a dull sound, as if the corpses had fallen on a floor. Then came the turn of the other vehicles. When they had all been emptied the assistants remounted, some on the shafts, others along the shaft-sides of the carts, and after a final farewell the assistants and gendarmes departed for Paris in the night that had fallen.

The young woman had looked upon the funeral task from a distance. By the light of the torches she could behold its continuation on the further side of the dilapidated wall. Some men were bending over the bodies, were undressing them, pulling off stockings, unbuttoning overcoats and jackets, tearing off blood-soaked shirts. The clothes were all heaped up pell-mell with the boots and shoes, whilst the smoky light of the candles illuminated that tragic vision of the grave-diggers bending over the naked corpses of the guillotined.

The spoliation being concluded, an inventory was made of the clothes. The clerks noted in their registers the articles of attire, the camisoles, the skirts, the petticoats, the jackets. During this interval the corpses were pushed towards a trap-door in the centre of the floor, communicating with the deep trench dug out beneath the resounding planks. The bodies dropped on those of the previous batch with a soft, dull noise, the heads rebounding to the right and left on the bodies which had been hurled into the charnel-house.

Late at night the job ended with the last corpse thrown through the trap-door. The torches were then extinguished, the candles blown out; the grave-diggers left, shutting the wooden door of the enclosure behind them.

But the young woman had remained there.

When the last of the men had gone, she came out of

hiding, still in panic fear, still in tears, and fell down sobbing before the door that had been shut on the Picpus charnel-house.

. . . . .

The young woman was called Paris. On that twenty-second day of Messidor, Year II, she had witnessed the guillotining of her father, André Paris, groom to the Duke de Brissac and coach-conductor. With drawn, haggard face, her heart throbbing to suffocation with its violent beating, she had followed at a distance the tumbrel taking him to his doom. She had seen his head fall in stupefied astonishment—for never did the old French word (*étonnée*) more exactly describe anyone struck by thunder (*tonnerre*). We have followed her steps in the rear of the waggons, and we know by what superhuman heroism she discovered the trench in which her beloved one was about to sleep the sleep eternal.

Five days later she returned to the same spot. Then it was her brother, François Paris, a former servant of M. de Mandat and an employee at the military staff-office, who was despoiled by the grave-diggers and hurled through the trap-door. The poor young woman ran away, hiding her grief and despair in a gloomy attic, keeping in mind the memory of the place where rested the two beings who had been dear to her in her obscure life. After the passing of the Terror, she used to visit the ground at Picpus every Sunday, and there on the bare hillock, where the fresh grass was growing, she would kneel down, praying for her dead and the dead buried beneath her.

On 4th Thermidor the Duchess d'Ayen had been cast down there. Her daughter, the Countess de Montagu,

had emigrated, and returning under the Consulate she set about searching for the unknown burial-place. A prolonged search led her to Mlle. Paris, who gained a livelihood by lace-making. The poor young woman brought Mme. de Montagu to the tragic plot of ground. Since 1796 it had been bought by the Princess of Hohen-zollern, who had surrounded the spot with walls, as a shelter for a place bedewed with so much blood, the soil glutted with so many bodies. That was Mme. de Montagu's discovery of the families of the persons guillotined in 1794.

Mme. d'Ayen's daughter resolved to make the trench-grave a place of pilgrimage, to keep it for the piety of the stricken families. Ruined by the Revolution her means were scanty. Mlle. Paris came to her aid, she, the poor working woman ; she economised, started a subscription among the families of the victims. The enterprise succeeded. Other plots of ground were bought. A church arose near the funereal enclosure, and masses were celebrated there in memory of the guillotined. A deserted field was presently added to the charnel-house, and the families of the victims set their tombs in this new spot. The sons, brothers, sisters and mothers of the dead came and slept in peace near them, in that same soil. On the anniversaries of the executions, relations in mourning used to kneel on the turfy hillock which Mlle. Paris visited so long alone amid the Sabbath silence and peace.

Well, the tragic enclosure is still in existence to-day, and we went to pay it a visit with our minds full of memories of the Terror.

. . . . .

It is a windy, rain-laden day in February, which is



trailing the grey scarves of its clouds over suburban Paris. The jolting hackney-carriage climbs the steep escarpment of the Rue de Picpus. On the left and right are high walls of hospital and convent, their roofs corroded by leprous mosses, and some broken-down hovels and ruins of houses with empty window-frames and shattered panes of glass ; and there are still some walls standing over which bare, black branches were dangled to and fro by the north wind of the month of Pluviôse.

As the trot of the horse slows down during the ascent, the whole scene passes jerkily by like some roughly coloured cameo with a grey ground. Suddenly at the corner of a street a blue plate blazons forth the quarter : " Rue Santerre." Lower down it was " Rue Gossec " ; further on it is " Rue Fabre d'Eglantine." We are a few steps from the tragic Barrière du Trône-Renversé, to-day the Place du Trône, right in the heart of the revolutionary quarter, where in 1793 spread a mournful solitude, where slumber to-day the convent courtyards in the shadow of the silent belfries.

The hack makes a last effort : we stop.

This is No. 35.

The door is old, worn out, black. An iron door-leaf is rusting on the worm-eaten tympan. The bell rings amid the silence of a courtyard as we guess it to be. The door creaks dully, is put on the jar to let in a little light, and is at last opened. A goffered mob-cap, framing the ascetic pallor of a face with light blue forget-me-not eyes, is thrust forward. Some surprise is visible in the interrogative look. Has not the bell ringing in the silence perhaps disturbed the peace of years ?

" We have come to see the cemetery, sister——"

She smiles gently, removes the safety-chain barring the doorway, and utters a word of welcome in a faint, distant voice.

We enter. There is a grey, deserted courtyard, with gravel that screeches under our steps, flanked by the convent buildings with their windows adorned with white muslin, and shut in by the church with its yellowish rough-cast and its shiny, common, painted windows. A canary is singing at a window. A small utterance of life frightened amid the cloistral silence.

The goffered mob-cap bows and departs, and the lowly, sweetly resigned smile fades away, down there, in the direction of a quickly shut door. An old woman appears, umbrella under her arm, who is to guide us. That oppressive silence, that measureless silence imprisoned within those gloomy walls, that silence of death—Of death? It is death we have come to seek here, the funereal Lady who, pressing her finger on her withered lips, welcomes us in this courtyard where our muffled step vibrates in the echo. Let us go on.

To the left of the church a door is being pushed open. It requires a vigorous effort. The Pluviôse wind is there, weighing on the leaf of the folding door. The fist continues persistently pushing. We enter into the cloister garden. In the distance, under the low, grey sky, the big alley defiles in a single straight line between trees cut *à la Le Nôtre*. There are terraces where late plants are fading, where the last dead and rotting leaves of stunted shrubs are falling. We walk beside the wall with its big, rough bricks. There are black plat-bands under the bed of soil; some stone benches where, in the mild sun of the month of Floréal, pale hands were destined to be warmed; a recess with a trellis of green wood; then,

suddenly, an iron door. It creaks mournfully, with a wounded, shrill cry.

It is the cemetery.

Ah ! we must not stay here. Of what avail to decipher the names beneath the moss, among the fallen, overturned, cracked tombstones, on flags rent as by a thunderbolt ?

The enclosure is narrow, oblong, ending in a wall, a simple, average, ordinary, nameless wall, which speaks neither to heart nor to memory. Memory ! Memory ! All at once everything surges back impetuously to the mind. That wall is the horizon that bounds the Revolutionary tragedy ; that is where the drama of '93 ends.

Towards the centre it is pierced by a low door, with a light-coloured grating. A marble plaque fitted into the wall tells the story to forgetful hearts :

VAULT OF THE HOUSE  
OF SALM-KYRBURG  
AND OF 1306 PERSONS WHO PERISHED  
AT THE BARRIÈRE DU TRÔNE FROM THE 20TH PRAIRIAL,  
YEAR II,  
TO THE 9TH THERMIDOR FOLLOWING.

You lean over the railings : the turf is level, short and thick. Thin, black cypresses spring up in rustling groves, bend to the wind in a supple line. There is nothing in that tragic enclosure, except the four stelæ of the Princes of Salm, nothing except 1306 corpses of the guillotined in the rich grass.

Up to Messidor, Year II (June, 1794), it was a peaceful, deserted, country spot. The nuns canonesses of Saint-



Augustin, who were established in the village of Picpus, came there for relaxation from the rigour of the conventual rules. During the days of the Terror they were dispersed, some going into exile, others to the Conciergerie prison. The convent became a prison, the garden a cemetery. Some employees of the Paris Commune came, bringing planks with them on a tumbrel. With the planks they made an enclosure, within it they dug an enormous ditch, a large piece of wall was knocked down and the corpses were thrown through that opening.

The guillotine, which had come from the Place de la Bastille to the Barrière du Trône-Renversé, had filled up in twelve days (from 22nd Prairial to 3rd Messidor—10th to 21st June) the trench in the Saint-Marguerite cemetery in the Rue Saint-Bernard. So a fresh cemetery had to be provided and choice fell upon the garden of the Picpus convent. Therefore the inscription on the marble plate we have cited is wrong in the date. The first victims were buried there on 4th Messidor (22nd June) and not on 20th Prairial.

As these burials at Picpus took place during the hot season of the year—June and July—decomposition was quick and the stench of the bodies threatened an epidemic. We have the report of an officer of health on the subject, and he advised the use of the floor and the trap-door in order “to concentrate in this ditch the dangerous emanations which without such precaution might arise.”<sup>1</sup>

It is hardly probable this method would have stayed the epidemic if it had appeared; in any case it was escaped by the shutting of the cemetery. On 10th Thermidor, Sanson and his assistants dismounted the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* this document in my book: “La Guillotine en 1793, d’après des documents inédits des Archives Nationales,” Book VI, p. 296.

guillotine at the Barrière du Trône-Renversé and remounted it the same day in the Place de la Révolution. On that day the people of Paris were to be afforded a spectacle worthy of them.

Twenty-two heads were going to fall, and among them those of Saint-Just, Couthon, and Robespierre. Besides, the trench was almost full up. Picpus had become the cemetery of the nobility, and almost all the great families had some of their members there. In that soil which was thus devoted to the guillotined rested the two brothers Trudaine, the Montalemberts, the Créqui-Montmorencys, the Saint-Priests, the Abbé de Salignac-Fénélon, Marshal de Lévis and his two daughters, Farmer-General de Laborde, the Marquis de Talaru, Charles de Flers, General-in-Chief of the Army of the Pyrenees, the Constituent François Gossin, Brigadier-General de Gouy d'Arcy, the Duke de Gesvres, M. de Nicolaï, first President of the Chambre des Comptes, Colonel de la Tour du Pin Chambly, General Thomas Ward, and the three Princes of Hénin, Salm-Kyrburg, and Montbazou-Rohan. On 29th Messidor (17 July) the Carmelite nuns of Compiègne had been cast into this excavation with their Superior, Thérèse de Saint-Augustin, whom the charge-sheet qualifies as "the woman Lidoine." Among them were the two sisters who attended to the turning-box, Catherine and Thérèse Soiron, and sister Piedcourt, who, though 80 years of age and quite helpless, had been thrown down from the cart by one of Sanson's assistants on its arrival at the Conciergerie. All had died singing the "Te Deum."<sup>1</sup>

There also lay there the wife of the Marshal de Noailles, she who had answered the questions of President Dumas :

<sup>1</sup> Picot, "Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique pendant le xviii<sup>e</sup> siècle," Vol. V, p. 362.

"I am deaf (*sourde*) and can hardly hear at all, Citizen President."

To which Dumas had jovially retorted :

"So I suppose you used to conspire *sourdement* (underhandedly, secretly)."

She had climbed into the cart with her daughter-in-law, the Duchess d'Ayen, and her granddaughter, the Viscountess de Noailles, just as the Marshal de Mouchy, aged 79, had accompanied his wife, aged 66.

There were besides : Léonard, the Queen's hairdresser,<sup>1</sup> Louis de Champcenetz, an officer in the French Guards, who made jokes in the presence of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and asked : "Excuse me, President, but do you do things here as they do in the National Guard—can one procure a substitute ?"<sup>2</sup> Mme. de Saint-Juirre, aged 73, and yet others, unknown, forgotten. How is it that the echo of Picpus has not preserved in that tragic solitude the noise of all those truncated heads thrown into the hole, like ripe fruit plucked from the espaliers of Thermidor ? There in the night of 7th Thermidor had fallen the handsome, curly, swarthy head of André Chenier, whose memory is to-day perpetuated by a marble plaque, to the left of the railings of the common trench :

"ANDRÉ DE CHÉNIER

SON OF GREECE AND OF FRANCE

1762-1794

SERVED THE MUSES

LOVED WISDOM

DIED FOR THE TRUTH."

<sup>1</sup> "The Recollections of Léonard" have been published in English by Messrs. Greening and Co., London.

<sup>2</sup> H. Wallon, "Histoire du Tribunal Révolutionnaire de Paris avec le journal de ses actes," Vol. V, p. 98.



*Died for the truth!*—We need not discuss that pious falsehood. Who would think even of speaking in such a place? The wind is ever stirring the frail branches of the dark cypresses. Silence reigns at Picpus with an icy, solemn majesty. Memory cons over all those names, unknown, now forgotten names, names of old France and Versailles. Still one more. There among the humble remains of priests, merchants, butchers, peasants, servants, shopkeepers, rotted the body of noble General de Beauharnais.

The harsh silence of death, the savage evenness of the ever-green, ever-young grass! The Princes of Salm were buried in the enclosure itself. The stelæ are still to be seen, covered in the green, tottering beneath the cypresses. The Marquis de Lafayette was interred there in 1834, by the wall of the common trench, on the right of the entrance. The American colony maintains there a flag constellated with the white stars of the Union, and the winter wind blows the pious emblem noisily to and fro, the rain plasters it against the worm-eaten wood of a tall, gilded flag-staff.

Nothing has altered in the cemetery. On summer days a gardener works on the ground and mows down the high grass of the tragic meadow. The mowing ended, the railings are closed. They rust until next Messidor. You look through the bars, you concentrate your look, ever and yet again, on the solitary, bare hillock where sleeps the holocaust to Saint Liberty. What do we expect? The miracle of Memory, the white, wan theory of the victims of '94, of those beheaded under Sanson's care on the platform, where Voulland used to go to see "the celebration of the Red Mass"?

A sinister plot of earth that, unknown, forgotten, dis-

dained in that suburb of Paris. Where are the pilgrims attracted by the recollection of it? On the day in question we found ourselves alone at the funereal spot, at that last refuge. Behind the wall people were hurrying on, workmen in corduroy coats, women carrying the evening meal. Not one of them raised a head, scornful or ignorant of the unknown trench, of the last charnel-house of the Terror.

## MME. TALLIEN

### I

“THE police administrator is just leaving here. He came to tell me that I was to go up to the Tribunal to-morrow, that is to say, to the scaffold. It does not seem much like the dream I had last night : Robespierre no longer existed, and the prisons were open—— But, thanks to your conspicuous cowardice, there will soon not be a single person in France capable of realising it.”

. . . . .

Tallien found this note slipped under his door one night in Thermidor on returning to his house, 17 Rue de la Perle. The note came from the prison of La Force, and had been written by Thérésia de Cabarrus, formerly Countess de Fontenay. She was arrested at Versailles in Prairial, and had been taken away as a prisoner in a hackney carriage. As they passed the Place de la Révolution, alongside of the guillotine, which had been permanently fixed up, she had been compelled to put her head out of the window, whilst she was told :

“In three days you will yourself play in that piece !”

On arrival at the Petite Force she undergoes the operation known as *rapiotage* : she is stripped naked before eight jeering men, she is searched ; then, after restoring



her chemise to her and giving her a rough, coarse, canvas dress she is locked up.<sup>1</sup>

Why is she there, that Thérésia who almost yesterday reigned all-powerful by the side of handsome Tallien at Bordeaux? And why did Tallien himself, a proconsul with unlimited powers, wander about during this month of Thermidor, frightened, restless, anguished at heart, through a hostile Paris, where doors were shut to him, where friends looked aside as he passed?

We must go back for the reason and follow step by step the amorous and public life of the daughter of the Count de Cabarrus in its incidents.

The very rare portraits of Mme. Tallien's father which have come down to us show us a tall, bony old man, with a long, hairless face like a knife-blade, sensual, fleshy lips, and a broad, bulging forehead.

He was born in ancient, rugged Bayonne where Spanish vivacity mingles with French ardour. The Cabarruses were honourable merchants, who conceived for their son a future similar to their own at the time, the quiet life of an income earned in the business office. Young Cabarrus was cruelly to deceive those dear paternal hopes. He was sent to the Fathers of the Oratory of Toulouse and returned thence with a disposition quite different from that suitable for a calm, industrious career.

Old M. Cabarrus had a business correspondent at Saragossa in Spain, M. Galabert, who was almost a friend

<sup>1</sup> "It was especially inflicted on the youngest and prettiest women; the woman stood up before some scoundrel, who undressed her and made sure that she was not concealing any assignats about her person or making away with any of her jewellery. This brigandage made the fortunes of those monsters."—Casimir Stryienski, "*Deux Victimes de la Terreur (la Princesse Lobomirska, Madame Chalgrin)*," Paris, 1899, p. 34.

of the family. After some exchange of views the young man was sent to him with the idea of perfecting him both in commerce and in the study of the Spanish tongue.

Rejoicing at the idea of seeing a new country, young Cabarrus set out, crossed the Pyrenees, and one fine evening, delighted and tired by his journey, he arrived unexpectedly in the Galabert family. A great to-do was made of him, he was welcomed as a member of the family, and settled down among the worthy people, who were glad to have a compatriot amongst them.

M. Galabert had a daughter. She was pretty, dark, piquant. What was bound to happen, happened. Young Cabarrus fell in love with the young Miss Galabert, he told her so, she believed it, and one fine night, deserting the paternal roof, descending from the windows by means of knotted bed-linen, they went together and lit upon a fine curé who recited three prayers, crossed himself twice, and married them.

Then was poor M. Galabert indeed desperate and furious—a father-in-law in spite of himself. It is easy to imagine the beautiful row there was to be heard that day in the business firm at Saragossa, and the rough letter of reproach and lamentation written to M. Cabarrus at Bayonne.

But there is no wrath so great but it ends. M. Galabert's ended one day, and he opened his arms in forgiveness to his daughter, and his heart to his son-in-law, and gave him a soap factory near Madrid. And so in his turn young Cabarrus became a business man in spite of himself. It seems that during this period he did the wise thing, for he went and settled down with his wife in his new home.

The apparent resignation to his strange fate did not last long. The neighbourhood of Madrid was certainly

too tempting for that ardent soul, that restless inspiration which dreamt of higher destinies than those possible to a soap manufacturer. He plunged into political circles, intrigued, made himself known, was brilliant, and amid the financial embarrassments inflicted on Spain by the American war, he conceived the project of creating paper money for the purpose of saving public credit.

In any other country the young man's Utopia would have excited public ridicule, but in Spain, the land of paradox, it was greeted with applause, and, what was better, put into practice. Ten million piastres were issued in paper money, and on 2nd June, 1782, Cabarrus founded the Royal Bank of Saint-Charles and had himself named director.

Good-bye, factory ! good-bye, soap ! A period of splendid fortune is beginning for the financier who has just revealed his brilliant ability and on whom the King showers favours. The good luck lasted six years ; on the death of Charles III in 1788 the rout commences ; Cabarrus is ruined in 1790, he is in gaol till 1792. " To-day on the throne, to-morrow in irons," wrote Mme. Roland. Cabarrus has that hard experience. However, he still has faith in his star, and he assuredly is not wrong.

Lo and behold ! his rehabilitation arrives ; he leaves prison, is made Count, named Minister Plenipotentiary of Spain at the Congress of Rastadt ; in 1808 he returns from Holland as Minister ; he takes the portfolio of Finance, and on 27th April, 1810, the tolling of all the bells in Seville proclaims the end of his amazing life of adventures.

He left a daughter, the Thérésia with whom we are concerned. She was born during her father's sojourn at Madrid, inheriting his romantic imagination, his sensual



ardour, of which she was later on to give so many public proofs. She began with a masterstroke which revealed what she was to be and always to remain.

The Prince de Listenay, coming from Paris, stopped in Madrid. He was a young, handsome-faced man, haloed with the prestige of a famous name, and Mlle. Cabarrus could not fail to be smitten with this Prince Charming who had come from France to marry the daughter of the King's Ambassador, M. le Duc de Lavaugnyon. When in love, Mlle. Cabarrus never recoiled, and in her first love adventure she settled the conduct of all her succeeding ones. The Prince de Listenay on his side did not remain insensible to the dark, ardent beauty of this determined young woman, Spanish in character and sensuality. There were mysterious rendezvous, secret meetings, where eternal love was sworn by the two lovers who were so different every way and whom all the social conventions were sure to separate.

But what love-secret was ever kept? What oath of affection was ever observed? The prince and his mistress were no exception to the rule. The affair was bruited about, and reached the Ambassador's ears at the same time as M. de Cabarrus heard of it. They were not long in finding a satisfactory solution of the problem, to preserve peace on the one hand, and to save paternal amour-propre on the other.

A M. de Fontenay, a Councillor in the Parliament of Rouen, was just then travelling for amusement for a short while in Spain. Chance brought him to meet M. de Cabarrus. They talked. M. de Fontenay possessed a considerable fortune and was a bachelor. He found Thérésia charming, declared his love to the father, and the marriage was concluded. This was perhaps rather a



MME. TALLIEN





barrack-room way of dealing with the matter, but the choice of husband, like that of the means, was of small import, seeing the urgency of the situation. We may believe the young woman felt little enthusiasm for this union based on reason, but the result was the realisation of a cherished longing : to go to France, to establish herself in Paris. It represented to her mind elegance, pleasure, love; in fact, her life. Accordingly the newly mated couple were not slow in bidding farewell to Iberian beauties, and the travelling-carriage took them rapidly to the frontier.

A singular honeymoon trip was that of the old Councillor and the young woman who had hardly been freed from the most troubling and most passionate of liaisons ! His superannuated gallantries must have bored her dreadfully, considering that she had had that princely lover at her feet, that she had tasted the strong wine of intoxicating love.

They reached Paris without hindrance. Already there were dull growlings of the thunder that was to uproot the old French society, knock down the monarchy and shake the whole of Europe so that a century scarcely sufficed to stop the trembling.

Society heartily welcomed the beautiful Mme. de Fontenay. In those brilliant salons, which were the last camps of the opposition, her dark beauty, enhanced by exotic charm, caused a lively sensation, and the discreet or brutal homage she received proved to her the power of her feminine grace.

Mme. Vigée-Lebrun, painter to Marie-Antoinette, and Mme. du Barry's last friend, was glad to receive Mme. de Fontenay. All the celebrated people met at that period in her salon, and Rivarol was one of its ornaments.

One day a handsome young man, elegant despite the

simplicity of his attire, came to the salon carrying a parcel of press-proofs. He wanted M. Rivarol, to submit some corrections to him. Rivarol made the corrections whilst the young man waited. As he waited, he noticed the beautiful Thérésia before departing again. Somebody inquired his name.

"Who is that fine young fellow?"

"He is only a printer's overseer of the *Moniteur*," said Rivarol carelessly. The conversation then changed.

Events followed their course. The new Government had just passed the divorce law. Mme. de Fontenay made use of it, and by common consent the parliamentary councillor and herself separated. The former, seeing how things were going, took the wisest measure: he crossed the Rhine and went to Coblenz to swell the army of the *émigrés*. The former Countess de Fontenay remained by herself, and chose a new lover. The year '93 arrived. Family interests just then summoned Citizeness Cabarrus to Bordeaux. The journey was to decide her whole life and transmit her name to posterity.

The Terror lay heavily at this period on the Gironde. The Conventional, Tallien, had just made his appearance, armed with the steel of the Law. The shadow of the Committee of Public Safety was behind him, and the guillotine was executing the decrees of a prompt, inflexible, sovereign justice.

One evening, as he was despatching his courier, a noise of rioting caused him to get up from the table and run to the balcony. It was a mob escorting with its shouts and curses a young aristocrat woman who was being taken to gaol. It was the former Countess de Cabarrus, who had been arrested at her house as a suspect.

An hour later, by an order of Tallien, she was brought into his cabinet. The lamps cast a bright light on the face of the Conventional attired in his austere black suit, in which the only white spot was the muslin cravat. On entering, Thérésia uttered a cry ; she had just recognised in Tallien the printer's overseer who had once brought proofs to Rivarol in Mme. Vigée-Lebrun's salon.

The first hour or two was spent in talking over memories of former times, and as Thérésia had her life at stake, and, moreover, her heart was sensible to male beauty, the dawn found her in Tallien's arms. The liaison, of which the Conventional was proud, was advertised by him everywhere. It was then that Omphale made up her mind to conquer the Hercules of the Girondine Terror. Thanks to Thérésia the scaffold knew days of relaxation, the harvest of beheadments diminished, clemency reigned in Bordeaux. Dallying with the beautiful Thérésia, Tallien forgot the task entrusted to him by the Committee of Public Safety. Love filled him with scorn for politics. A terrible awakening awaited him.

The Committee suddenly recalled him in a curt, dry letter, which reflected the chilliness of the suspended knife. Tallien and Thérésia hurriedly left Bordeaux and rushed off to Paris. Whilst he hastened to justify himself before the Convention, the Jacobins, the Committee, his mistress lay in concealment. She had a warrant of arrest out against her. Being denounced, she was arrested at Versailles, and it was after several weeks' detention in the Petite Force prison that she sent Tallien the note of desperate contempt which he had just found under his door on that night in Thermidor.



## II

A legend which has been allowed to go unchecked runs to the effect that Joséphine de Beauharnais, who was destined later on to assume the Imperial Crown, made Mme. Tallien's acquaintance in the prison of the Carmelites. There is brought forward in alleged proof the inscription preserved on one of the walls of the cell:

"Oh, liberty, when shalt thou cease to be an empty word? We have now been confined seventeen days; they tell us we shall get out to-morrow; but is that not an empty hope?"

"CITOYENNE TALLIEN.

"JOSÉPHINE VEUVE BEAUHARNAIS.

"DAIGUILLON."<sup>1</sup>

The legend has been upset by a historian too much forgotten nowadays, M. Alexandre Sorel, in his excellent work on the Carmelites prison.<sup>2</sup> So I fancy it may be not altogether useless to bring together here the reasons for his conclusion, which will very felicitously serve to supplement what has already been said about the two famous heroines, one of whom was the queen of the Directory and the other the Empress of the French.

"The first thing which struck us on simply reading the inscription was that the word 'enfermés' is in the masculine, a fact which contrasts singularly with the sex

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to Jeanne-Victoire de Noailles, the wife of Emmanuel Armand d'Aiguillon-Duplessis-Richelieu, who was shut up in the Carmes on 19 Pluviôse, Year II, by order of the Committee of Public Safety.

<sup>2</sup> "Le Couvent des Carmes et le Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice pendant la Terreur," 2nd edition, Paris, Didier, 1864, pp. 317 *sqq.*

of the pretended signatories and the education they ought to have received ; but perchance it was a *lapsus calami*. When you write on a wall and at such a moment a mistake in spelling is quite excusable.

Let us therefore take each signature separately and examine what genuineness there may be in them.

The first is Mme. Tallien's. We have no difficulty about it ; it is apocryphal. Mme. Tallien's case is indeed like the Girondins' : she never set foot in the Carmelites' prison.<sup>1</sup> At the epoch of the Terror she was arrested and brought before Tallien, who conceived an irresistible passion for her, and had her set free. When Tallien's conduct during his stay in the Gironde brought down on him the anger of several Conventionals, he was blamed for his weakness, accused of 'moderatism,' and wellnigh paid with his head for the generous impulses which had been noticed in him. Then Robespierre, not yet daring to attack him face to face, determined to take revenge on her whom he suspected of having instigated that generosity, and on 3 Prairial he ordered the Committee of Public Safety to have Mme. de Fontenay arrested and everybody who might happen to be with her. The Committee entrusted the task to Brigadier-General Boulanger. The latter, having heard that Mme. de Fontenay had left for Versailles, went there at once, and, first of all, on the night of 11-12 Prairial, seized upon the chambermaid, a valet named Guill-Bidos, then a young man named Guéry who was in the house, and lastly Mme. de Fontenay.

They were taken forthwith to La Force prison and she

<sup>1</sup> What remains of the Revolution gaol, at the corner of the Rue d'Assas and the Rue de Vaugirard, forms even to-day the community of the Carmelites.

was secretly incarcerated in a dungeon where her only resting-place was a little straw which was not even changed. Some time after this severity was somewhat relaxed and she found herself in the same circumstances as the other women prisoners.

Then Tallien mounted to the tribune of the Convention and, vigorously assailing Robespierre, he cried :

‘ I asked just now that the veil should be torn asunder. I have just noticed with pleasure that it is so entirely ; that the conspirators are unmasked, that they will soon be annihilated and that liberty will triumph. (*Loud cheers.*) Everything proclaims that the foe of the national representatives is about to fall beneath their blows. We give our growing Republic a proof of our Republican loyalty. I have so far imposed silence on myself, because I knew from a man who is in contact with the tyrant of France that he had made out a proscription list. I have not desired to recriminate ; but I saw yesterday the meeting of the Jacobins ; I trembled for the country ; I saw the army of the new Cromwell being formed ; and I armed myself with a dagger to pierce his bosom if the National Convention had not the courage to pass a decree of accusation against him.’

The Convention had that courage, and we know that Robespierre, seeing he was ruined for ever, fired a pistol-shot at himself which only caused the fracture of his jaw ;<sup>1</sup> next day he bore his mutilated head to that scaffold on which so many victims had been sacrificed by his orders.

Robespierre once overthrown, Tallien’s first thought

<sup>1</sup> We know, on the contrary, that it was a young gendarme called Merda (not Méda) who on the night of 9-10 Thermidor wounded Robespierre with a pistol-shot at the Hôtel de Ville, whither he had fled.



was for Mme. de Fontenay. He obtained from the Committee of Public Safety the order to set her free, and on 12 Thermidor (30th July, 1794) the beautiful captive quitted La Force, where she had been 70 days. A short time after she became the wife of her deliverer.

In order to convince ourselves thoroughly as regards the place where Mme. de Fontenay was confined we consulted the La Force register, and there we found under date of 3 Prairial, Year II (22nd March, 1794), the following record :

‘Thérèse Cabarrus, married name Fontenay, 25 years of age, native of Madrid in Spain, without profession, living at Versailles, height 4 ft. 11 in., brown hair and eyebrows, ordinary forehead, brown eyes, medium nose, small mouth, round chin.

‘Sent to this house to be there detained in secret by virtue of the order of the Committee of Public Safety under date of 3 Prairial. (The warrant for arrest delivered by the Champs Elysées Section.)

‘Set at liberty the 12th Thermidor, Year II of the French Republic, by virtue of an order of the citizens Elie Lacoste, Louis (du Bas-Rhin), Lavicomterie, Amar, Vadier, Voulant, Jagot, Dubarran, Members of the Committee of Public Safety.’

There cannot therefore be the least doubt in this regard, and it is certain to us that Mme. Tallien was never imprisoned in the Carmes ; but supposing even that she was there, we could not admit that she signed herself, ‘Citoyenne Tallien,’ since her marriage to Tallien only took place after her leaving gaol. It would on her side have been an act of frivolity and inconsequence which might have ruined them both on the spot ; and

assuredly Mme. Tallien had too much sense to be guilty of such folly.

Let us now go on to Mme. de Beauharnais's signature.

Here we come across a real difficulty.

If the signature is compared with those of the future Empress during this same period, it is observed that Mme. de Beauharnais leaves out her Christian name Joséphine and signs only 'Lapagerie Beauharnais.' And when she later adopts the name of Joséphine for her signature, the way in which she writes the name is not at all like that which figures on the walls of the Carmelite Convent.

Further, if this signature, 'Joséphine veuve Beauharnais,' be taken into consideration together with the meaning itself of the inscription, there is something irreconcilable in them.

Joséphine was indeed imprisoned on 2 Floréal (21st April, 1794), and she only became a widow on 5 Thermidor following (23rd July), that is to say, three months later. Again, the inscription reads: 'We have now been in prison 17 days.' And the supposition is that the three signatories were arrested at the same time, which for one thing is not correct. But truly, if even it be allowed, Joséphine could not sign herself 'veuve Beauharnais' 17 days after entering the Carmes, as her husband was still alive and was in the same prison as herself; on the other hand, if the inscription is later than her widowhood, she must have been shut up more than 17 days, and the text does not agree with the real situation.

Now, what we have to declare is that we have discovered a striking resemblance between the words 'veuve Beauharnais' and those of the same nature which figure

at the bottom of the autographs we have examined. Accordingly we are disposed to admit the authenticity of that part of the signature, as we shall explain later on.

As for Mme. d'Aiguillon's we have not yet found anything that might serve as a means of comparison between her real signature and the one attributed to her ; we believe, however, that it was certainly she who wrote her name. The reason determining us is that it is certain she lived in the same room as Joséphine de Beauharnais and that a true intimacy sprang up between them.

We derive the proof of it from a passage in the 'Mémoires sur l'Impératrice Joséphine,' by Georgette Ducrest, memoirs in which caprice has assuredly left its mark more than once, but which contain, none the less, here and there, some really historic details.

Now, here is what she represents the Empress as relating :

One morning the gaoler entered a room where I was *lying with the Duchess d'Aiguillon* and two other ladies ; he said he had come to take my truckle-bed, and give it to another prisoner.

'What, give it away ?' cried Mme. d'Aiguillon impetuously ; 'but I suppose Mme. de Beauharnais will then get a better one ?'

'No, no, she won't want one,' he answered with a cruel smile, 'because they're coming to fetch and take her to the Conciergerie and thence to the guillotine.'

At these words my companions in misfortune shrieked and screamed. I consoled them as best I could ; at last, wearied by their eternal laments, I told them their sorrow had no common sense, that not only should I not die, but I should be Queen of France.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "It was, as is known, the prediction which an old sibyl in Martinique had made to Joséphine." (Note by Alexandre Sorel.)



'Why don't you appoint your household?' inquired Mme. d'Aiguillon in a temper.

'Ah! that's true, I was not thinking about it. Well, my dear, I shall appoint you one of my ladies-in-waiting, I promise you.'<sup>1</sup>

Now to return to the inscription, we think Mmes. de Beauharnais and d'Aiguillon simply wrote their names on the wall, one under the other, and later on another and unknown hand added before the words 'veuve Beauharnais' that of 'Joséphine.' As for the body of the inscription, it appears to us to emanate from the same hand as that 'which has written other inscriptions in the room.' There is a very strong similarity between those inscriptions as regards thought and especially as regards the shape of the letters. So it is certain it was the same prisoner who wrote them both, whether before or after the sojourn of Mmes. de Beauharnais and d'Aiguillon in the room, because the detained were continually passing from one room into another, according to the humours of the gaoler on the arrival of fresh prisoners.

As for the alleged signature of the 'Citoyenne Tallien,' we see in it merely the retrospective fancy of some individual who thought of making the inscription still more curious by adding to the two names which were already there that of Mme. Tallien, with whom Joséphine was intimate later on."

The following account, contrary to M. Sorel's, admits, even affirms Mme. Tallien's presence in the Carmes. It is by M. Arsène Houssaye, who has made it one of the charming chapters of his book about Mme. Tallien.<sup>2</sup> It

<sup>1</sup> "Mme. d'Aiguillon, who became the Countess Louis de Girardin, was later on lady-of-honour to the Queen of Naples." ("Mémoires sur l'Impératrice Joséphine," Barba's edition, p. 56.)

<sup>2</sup> Arsène Houssaye, "Notre-Dame-de-Thermidor; histoire de Mme. Tallien"; 2nd edition, Paris, Plon, MDCCCLXVII, pp. 280 *sqq.*

will nevertheless be remarked that the inscription attributed to the ladies under detention is not quoted with all desirable fidelity.

“ I have seen the Carmelites’ dungeon into which the fatality of the Revolution cast three women who consoled each other almost upon their meeting : Thérésia Cabarrus, the Countess de Beauharnais and the Duchess d’Aiguillon—the old Society which was going soon to become the new. All three used to sleep in the same bed—I am mistaken, on the same straw. As Lamartine has so well put it, ‘ the image of death present to their eyes spared neither their gaze nor their imagination.’ ”

Their dungeon was a cell where the September murderers had massacred the most priests. Two of the cut-throats, tired of murders, had lain down a moment and leaned their sabres against the wall to recruit their strength. The profile of the two sabres, from the hilt to the end of the blade, had been slightly impressed in a silhouette of blood on the damp plaster, and was drawn on it like those fiery swords which the exterminating angels brandished in their hands around the tabernacles. You may still follow with your eye their contours as clearly traced and as fresh in impression as if the marks were never destined to dry up again. Never had youth, beauty, love and death been gathered in such a frame of blood.<sup>1</sup>

How did they pass the hours in the presence of this hateful spectacle of death, these three women who were youth, beauty and charm ? They were dying of the thirst for living.

<sup>1</sup> These impressions had caused the name of “ Sword-Room ” (Chambre des Epées) to be bestowed on the cell.

Mme. Tallien confessed later that she had at last accustomed herself to the horrors of the prison. 'Everybody was the friend of everybody. Some sitting down for the last time at the last banquet of life in the midst of their sad companions in misfortune would laughingly bid them an everlasting farewell. Others who were free behind the very bolts and during the terror of the night and the silence of the wickets would beguile pain and sleeplessness by throwing flowers on their truckle-beds. Over yonder several condemned victims, closely embracing whilst awaiting the return of light which was going to end their sufferings and close their eyes to the light, were summoning up their courage and cheerfulness. The amusements of their childhood would prevail at their agony.

'At times you might see them ape their executioners whom a thousand caricatures made recognisable; now as judges, now as victims, they would learn to walk to the scaffold; and pushing their resolution to the point of playing with the bloody iron which was about to strike off their heads, they used to enjoy a calmness of soul that fled far from their assassins' hearts. Such were the fearful and prophetic games that occupied the last moments of those brave martyrs, which were only broken off by the coming of the sombre wicket-keepers, announcing by the frightening tocsin of their enormous keys and the din of their dreadful bolts, that the blood-drunk executioners were impatiently awaiting the victims marked off the day before for the butchery of the day.'

Mme. d'Aiguillon had obtained the favour of keeping a pair of scissors, a pair of dice and some needles. She used to sew. Mme. de Beauharnais used to read and sew; Madame de Fontenay would tell stories and sing.



Life gave death its hand full of roses. They could not write, except on the wall with the teeth of their combs. You may still see to-day these inscriptions :

*' O liberty ! '*

It was the cry of the outside world, it was also the prison cry.

*' We shall leave here to-morrow.'*

They thought they would leave life when they left prison.

*' What is dying when one has descended into hell ? '*

And they had wanted to put their names together as if to leave the mark of their friendship on this page of history—the wall of the cell. One may still read those three names which awaken so many ideas to-day :

*' Citoyenne Tallien. Joséphine Beauharnais. D'Aiguillon.'*

(The writer reproduces here the passage from the *'Mémoires sur l'Impératrice Joséphine,'* already cited by Alexandre Sorel.)

Joséphine, it is true, does not utter the name of Mme. Tallien, but it is known that Napoleon, who always dominated her mind, had forbidden her the company of the most beautiful of the Thermidorians."

Joséphine quitted the Carmes on 19 Thermidor, Year II (6th August, 1794). Nougaret in his "Histoire des Prisons" publishes the following details about her departure :

" Among the departures of to-day has been that of the Citizeness Beauharnais. She was generally popular here. The pleasure of learning that Tallien had just solaced her pains by breaking off her irons aroused a thousand hand-clappings, which affected her so much that she was overcome. When she had recovered, she bade us good-bye

and went away amid the prayers and blessings of the whole establishment."

Happier and greater destinies awaited her.

### III

There is no need to say more of the events of 9th Thermidor, which saw Robespierre's fall. It cannot be gainsaid that Tallien was one of the chief promoters of that revolution—Tallien spurred on by Thérésia; and my pen cannot adequately express my detestation of the odious strumpet to whom the Jacobin and Revolutionary idea was sacrificed. The causes of the downfall are, however, diverse, profound and contradictory. Bourdon (de l'Oise) accuses Robespierre of having called him an "intriguer"; Fouché is wroth with him because of his reproaches regarding his behaviour at Lyons; Tallien denounces his "unendurable arrogance"; in fine, all the corrupt accuse him of incorruptibility. But their heated cries, what are they beside Tallien's fulminations, the savage growls of the man who has sworn to save his country, and his country is the woman he loves?<sup>1</sup> So it is all up with Robespierre. He goes to the scaffold and Thérésia leaves prison.

Such courageous cowardice deserved a reward. Thérésia agreed to accept the name of Robespierre's murderer, and Notre-Dame-de-Thermidor's scandalous reign commenced. They lived on the further side of the Champs Élysées, on the present site of the Avenue Montaigne, among the fields, in a kind of rustic summer-house called the "Cottage." Party after party was given there, and Rosère told Laffon-Ladebat in later years that Mme. Tallien once gave a dinner to seven or eight women of her

<sup>1</sup> Georges Cain, "Coins de Paris," p. 131.

own kidney who wound up the orgy by getting drunk, stripping themselves naked and fighting among themselves.<sup>1</sup>

From time to time her name was the occasion of a public scandal, as witness an incident that happened at the salon of painting in 1796. The painter Laneuville had on show there (numbered 224) a portrait of the "Citizeness Tallien," holding in her hands her hair which had just been cut off by the jailer or executioner. The picture made such an impression that it had to be removed on the second day.<sup>2</sup> A song-writer seized the chance and soon the whole of Paris was singing :

"On n'a pas ôté sans raison  
Ce portrait, objet de scandale,  
La scène était dans le prison  
De la malheureuse Lamballe,  
Et Cabarrus, dont les desseins  
Ne sont pas d'enhardir le crime,  
Tenait, disait-on, dans les mains  
Les cheveux de cette victime."<sup>3</sup>

But Tallien's reign of love was nearing the end. Fidelity was the last thing to be expected of the woman Cabarrus. On leaving Spain with M. de Fontenay she had forgotten the Prince de Listenay ; this rapid oblivion was also to befall her second husband. At the Palais Égalité, in the salons, at the clubs, the numerous liaisons brazenly conducted by Mme. Tallien were the subject of mocking ridicule, and among them that with the handsome Barras, Joséphine de Beauharnais's other lover, was the most

<sup>1</sup> "Un déporté de Fructidor; souvenirs de Laffon-Ladebat, président du Conseil des Anciens." Journal publié par Frédéric Masson, 1907.

<sup>2</sup> Th. Gosselin, "Histoire anecdotique des Salons de Peinture depuis 1673," Paris, 1881, pp. 114, 115.

<sup>3</sup> "Critique du Salon, 1796."



notorious. However, Tallien had not ceased being in love, and that was what brought him to grief.

The household was going adrift, and violent scenes and never-ending quarrels were the daily fare. The man of Thermidor believed absence would bring the faithless one to reason.

Just then Bonaparte was preparing the expedition to Egypt. Tallien obtained the privilege of accompanying him, on the pretext of writing a diary of the voyage. Nothing has come to us of it except a few numbers of a paper he edited at Cairo under the title of *La Décade Egyptienne*.

Having gathered his Syrian laurels Bonaparte returned, forgetting the former editor of the *Ami des Citoyens* in the country of the sphinxes. The latter succeeded no better at Cairo with the new Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Menou, than with his wife. One fine day Menou put him on board ship, sending a denunciation of him in advance, which, in those days of expeditious politics, was bound to settle the account of the erstwhile but now repentant Jacobin in twenty-four hours. A contrary fate watched over him. An English frigate gave chase to the vessel that bore him, captured it and took the prize and crew to London.

The ex-Conventional had there to submit to the outrage of a warm welcome from the foes of the French name. The man who had upset Robespierre was acclaimed by the Whigs, who gave him a splendid fête at their club, after which the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire sent him her portrait framed in diamonds.

Tallien was a man of experience; he showed it by keeping the portrait and sending back the diamonds.

The end of his involuntary exile came. He disem-



TALLIEN





barked at Boulogne, took coach and reached his wife's house unexpectedly. He found the door shut. Mme. Tallien had forgotten her husband.

Thenceforth his only course was resignation. The loss of all his political illusions had fortified his philosophy, and he accepted the divorce required by the woman he had saved from the guillotine in '93 at Bordeaux, in '94 in Paris.

In 1805 the former Countess married for the third time. A fresh husband appeared, to aspire to the honour of her hand, to the pleasures of her company.

Count François-Joseph-Philippe de Caraman was then 34, being born 21st September, 1771. At the time of the Revolution he was an officer in the regiment of Noailles Dragoons, and the tempest had left his head on his shoulders. Despite the obstinate opposition of his family, who were far from flattered at the introduction of this strumpet of the Terror, the Count de Caraman persisted in his intention of marrying her, and having given Thérésia his word, he kept it.

"Whatever she does, she will always be Mme. Tallien," said the Conventional on hearing of the marriage. "The name will always be more notable than that of 'Princess de Chimère (Chimæra).'"<sup>1</sup>

That was maybe Tallien's thought, but the saying is certainly apocryphal, because it was only later on, when the Count de Caraman had inherited from his uncle the estate of Chimay in the Austrian Hainaut, that he assumed the title of prince. At the Restoration he was created a Chevalier de Saint-Louis et de Malte, colonel of cavalry, lieutenant of the King's wolf-hunting train, and Repre-

<sup>1</sup> Anonyme (Mlle. Georgette Ducrest), "Mémoires sur l'impératrice Joséphine," Paris, 1828.

sentative of the Ardennes Department in the Chamber of Deputies. Those who saw the new Princess at this period had some difficulty in recognising in her the lovely and radiant beauty of Notre-Dame-de-Thermidor.

Mme. Cavaignac, who met her at a dinner at Cambacérès's in 1812, found her "gross, blotchy, hardly recognisable."<sup>1</sup> Retiring to her estate, she hid under the princely coronet the red cap which she had been seen wearing in '93 by the side of Tallien in the landau that carried them amid popular acclamation.

#### IV

Not long ago, in the course of one of those conversations in which his charming, lively wit shines forth, M. Henry Houssaye, the illustrious Academician to whom we owe so many masterpieces about 1814 and 1815, related to me the following anecdote which he had from the mouth of the late Dr. Cabarrus, son of the famous Notre-Dame-de-Thermidor, whom M. Arsène Houssaye evoked in a fresco that was at once gracious, tragic and animated :

"About 1834 Dr. Cabarrus was finishing his medical studies in Paris when he received from his mother, who had become Princess de Chimay, a letter informing him that she was going to spend a few days with him. Doubtless she wished to revisit that Paris whither Royalty had returned, that Paris which had witnessed all her triumphs, where on 16th November, 1820, a poor, miserable man who had become a spy in the pay of the police, Tallien, had passed away.

<sup>1</sup> "Les Mémoires d'une inconnue," published after the original manuscript (1780-1816), Paris, 8vo, 1894, p. 343.

On the appointed day the Princess arrived at her son's house.

'What shall we do?' she exclaimed after the first embraces.

The matter was speedily settled; for how could one amuse a lady who was still elegant, who refused to abdicate and who had been absent from Paris for some months? The doctor took his mother to a famous restaurant where the fare was perfect and the wines of a noted brand. There was a merry, jovial dinner, during which old memories were summoned up between the mother of a celebrated past and the son who was eager to hear the secrets of a former period that was gone for ever; it was a delightful evening, which the former mistress of the proconsul of Bordeaux wished to wind up at the theatre, like some secret pleasure-party.

A cabriolet brought mother and son to one of the Boulevard theatres where a Revolution drama—a strange coincidence, accidental or planned?—was being played. Which one? Dr. Cabarrus could not call it to mind, and besides it matters little. We only know that the Ladies of Sainte-Amaranthe, those notorious courtesans of the Terror who were guillotined on 29th Prairial, Year II, in the company of 52 condemned men in red shirts, figured in the piece.

The Princess de Chimay pushed open the door of the hired box, and at the same instant on the stage the door of the drawing-room opened, and, standing in its frame, slender, hollow-backed, powdered just as he was before the fatal day, serious, slow, tragic and dumb, in a blue costume, appeared Maximilien de Robespierre.

A faint cry, followed by a heavy fall, was heard in the box. Notre-Dame-de-Thermidor had swooned."



How could one tell a more tragic or more moving anecdote? Related by the son who witnessed it it reaches a truly pathetic intensity. Thérésia, who was saved through the killing of the Incorruptible, fainting at the sight of that spectre in the fiction of the theatre, borne down by the abiding remorse aroused in her memory by a cleverly got-up actor!

Was it that that killed her a year later? Nobody knows. Already aged, grey-haired, death took her at 60. Her children were present, and among them the daughter who received the name of Thermidor at her baptism and had the Empress Joséphine for godmother. On the wrinkled countenance nothing remained of the triumphant beauty of '93. A whole tragedy of past life died with her.

Under a slab engraved with the princely coronet, in a Belgian village, at Chimay, sleeps, not forgotten, the cold dust of her to whose glory was sacrificed the man who held the destiny of France in his hand.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mme. Tallien, Princess de Chimay, died in the Belgian Hainaut, on 15th January, 1835, and was interred in the chapel of the Château de Chimay.

## JACQUES-LOUIS DAVID: PAINTER AND REGICIDE

ON the night of 26th January, 1816, the snow was falling thickly on the dark silence of the fields of Flanders. The clock of Cambrai Cathedral struck nine amid the storm. The postmaster went to the threshold of his office, wearing a fur cap, and began looking towards the Paris road. White, bare, rigidly straight, it was lost in the distance, all glittering with snow, under the gloomy sky. The man listened, raised his head and went in again.

"It won't be to-night," said he to the stablemen seated round the hearth glowing in the common hall. And wishing them good night he went up to bed. The wooden staircase was heard creaking under his heavy step and soon the Cambrai posthouse was enveloped in the silence of the dark and the silence of the snow.

Midnight had not long struck when suddenly the muffled gallop of a carriage re-echoed on the road together with the tinkling of clear, silvery bells. Everybody was asleep in the big, sombre house. The harsh neighing of a horse in the stable at times reached the highway. The noise of the vehicle was soon heard near at hand. A few more revolutions of the wheels and it stopped at the entrance of the house, on whose wall certain letters recently scratched only allowed of the two words "Royal Post" being read.

It was one of those large travelling berlines, covered

with leather and standing high on its wheels, which carried the luggage and boxes in the rear. The driver jumped from his seat and went and banged with his fist on the closed door. Snow had not stopped falling. After waiting a few moments and seeing no chance of an answer, he shouted out loudly :

“Horses !”

And his fist began again to hammer vigorously on the oaken panel. Upon this noise a window opened on the floor above, a head wearing a cotton night-cap leaned out and questioned the coachman :

“What is it ?”

“The horses for the carriage you had notice of,” replied the man.

The head disappeared grumbling and the window slammed to whilst the driver began to unharness the smoking steeds. In the carriage itself, behind the closed leathern curtains, nobody had stirred. It had stopped there among the snow, in the night, lighting up the white road with its big iron lantern and smoky wick. A sound of chains re-echoed in the post-stables and the carriage-gate, presently opening, displayed the form of a stableman, still half-asleep, who carried a lantern and led a horse by the bridle. The animal which had been freed from the shafts neighed in anticipation of coming rest and stepped towards the carriage-gate. Another stableman appeared, bringing the second horse. Amid oaths and rough language the fresh horses were put in.

The first ostler then took out of a pocket a crumpled form of obligatory receipt and remarked :

“It must be signed.”

The driver opened the carriage door and repeated the request to an invisible traveller.



"It must be signed."

The second ostler brought a leaden inkstand and a goose-quill pen, and presented the receipt to the traveller, upon whom shone the light of the carriage-lantern. You saw a man with a carefully clean-shaven face, with one of his cheeks swollen by a tumour,<sup>1</sup> wearing a metal-buttoned blue coat, covered by a bottle-green cloak.

The pen creaked over the paper and the man signed his name in an upright, correct, even handwriting: "Jacques-Louis David."<sup>2</sup>

The usual tip was given, the door shut and the berline resumed its journey towards the frontier of the Low Countries.

. . . . .

This traveller on the night of 26th January, 1816, was the former regicide of the Convention, the painter of Marat, and of Napoleon on his way to exile.

He was at the time a little less than sixty, having been born 31st August, 1748, in Paris, in the Quai de la Mégisserie. What was it that compelled the painter of the "Consecration at Notre-Dame" and the "Distribution of the Eagles" to leave the France which had crowned his brow with its finest laurels?

<sup>1</sup> "Biographie des hommes vivants," Vol. II, p. 313, 1816-1817.

<sup>2</sup> David, a Deputy in the National Convention, was the painter of the Revolution even as he was the painter of the Empire. We owe to him the "Consecration of Napoleon," the "Tennis-Court Oath," both at the Louvre; and "The Distribution of the Eagles" in the Versailles Museum. As a Conventional he voted for Louis XVI's death, and sat among the Mountaineers. He contributed to the fall of the Girondins and approved all the measures of the Terror. He was the man who regulated all the great fêtes of the Revolution: the transfer of the ashes of Voltaire and of the body of Lepelletier de St. Fargean to the Pantheon, the funeral procession of Marat, and the festival of the Supreme Being.

On 18th Brumaire<sup>1</sup> he observed to his friend Delécluse :

"I had always thought we were not sufficiently virtuous to be Republicans."

And for want of a Republic he had accepted the Empire. But had he not been the first to give an example of the lack of virtue of which he complained? Just before his friend Robespierre's fall he had cried, in the spirit of lyricism inspired by republican Sparta and ancient Rome: "Robespierre, my friend, I shall drink the hemlock with you!" and on 11th Thermidor he repentantly confessed, in speaking of that same Robespierre: "The wretched fellow unworthily deceived me." That was the standard of his Republican virtue. Let us admit, however, that his Imperial faith was destined to offer a tougher resistance to the blows of adverse fortune.

Napoleon had honoured him with his friendship, and it is known that the Emperor was scarcely lavish of it. After the Italian campaign, Bonaparte, on meeting the painter of "Marat Murdered," remarked to him with the brusqueness habitual to him which remained one of his charms :

"Why always paint the conquered, David? Paint some conquerors."

That phrase was the origin of the "Consecration" picture later on, a vast, epic fresco which even to-day illustrates the Louvre with its warlike and triumphal splendour. Thence also dated his friendship with Napoleon. The man who had presided over the National

<sup>1</sup> On 18th Brumaire, Year VIII, Bonaparte, on his return from Egypt, upset the Government of the Directory and substituted the Government of the Consulate, of which he took control, and was named First Consul and then Consul for life (1802). The Government of the Consulate existed till 1804, when it made room for the Empire.

Convention from 17th to 30th Nivôse, Year II, became a member of the Legion of Honour on 26th February, Year XII, and an officer of the Order on 22nd October, 1808; and on 10th September in the same year he was a Chevalier of the Empire. The Hundred Days were destined to see him a Commander.

We propose to stop at this period of the regicide's life, because it was the cause of his exile and it was through it that the ex-Terrorist was struck down.

The Terror had not altogether died with the Convention; it continued in the mixed battalion of Empire dignitaries, with Fouché and Cambacérès and likewise all those who had been kept aloof from the throne: Cavaignac, Barras, Tallien, Barère, who were to prolong the tragic memory of '93 beyond the Imperial *épopée*.

The year 1814 and the return of the Bourbons found David faithful to the Eagles, and that faithfulness cost him at the annual meeting of the Institut a public affront, which he endured with a remarkable dignity of character.

Two of his pupils, Rioult and Léopold Robert, were to be crowned at the meeting, and a custom as old as it was charming willed it that the laureates should go and embrace the master to whose lessons they owed their dawning renown. The Duke d'Angoulême came on that day to act as chairman, and when the name of David was proclaimed his own was omitted. All eyes turned in the direction of the man who had voted Louis XVI's death without appeal and without respite. He remained cold, impassive. He had confronted quite different looks in the National Convention.

It may readily be conceived that that was not the



method of rallying David to the Lilies. The Eagle was soon to return from exile with the March violets. The Emperor arrived amid the enthusiastic frenzy of France, which had risen to his call, and that call found David on his feet, ready to sign the article that was to be additional to the constitutions of the Empire.

That day he signed his decree of exile.

The warlike intoxication was fated quickly to subside on the day after Waterloo. The Empire and the Emperor were done for that time. The red hell of the Tropics awaited the great victim of defeat on whom the Holy Alliance was going to draw the bolts of Longwood.

The repressive measures of the Royalists were going to be merciless, and the execution of Ney and La Bédoyère, together with the murder of Marshal Brune, gave the standard. The latter had been taken with arms in their hands and had been treated according to the laws of war, and what a war! Others remained to be struck down, those who had acclaimed the Ogre on his return from exile, who had taken for the second time the oath of fidelity to the Usurper.

On 12th January, 1816, the *Chambre Introuvable* voted a so-called law of amnesty, the seventh article of which, referring to the regicides who had signed the additional act, compelled them to leave the kingdom. David had departed from Paris on 7th July, 1815, for a trip to Switzerland. That was the pretext: the reason is easily to be guessed. He wanted to wait and watch the march of events far away from both friends and enemies. The Royal ordinance of 24th July, 1815, had forgotten or passed him over, it does not matter much which.

He felt reassured and went to Besançon, where he put

up at the Hôtel de France in the Rue des Granges, whilst he wrote to his wife for further information. His wife, the pretty daughter of Pécoul, the contractor for the Royal buildings, whom he had married on his return from Rome, had remained in Paris. He wrote to her under the name of Geoffroy, feeling more and more every day the insecurity of his position. At last he made a bold move and asked the Prince de Schwartzemberg, who liked him, for leave to return to Paris. He obtained his request and he was in Paris when he was bowled over by Article 7 of the Law of 12th January. That is why we have seen him passing Cambrai on the night of the 26th, travelling in his berline to Belgium, where he was to end the last years of his glorious and troubled life.

. . . . .

It is in the hours just after defeat that it is truly interesting to study the faces of those Terrorists. David reached Brussels at a time when the smell of gunpowder and of the corpses on Mont-Saint-Jean had hardly faded from the Brabant wind. The former Department of La Dyle did not present a wild solitude by any means to the proscribed Conventional.

Cambacérès, Vadier, who had crossed the frontier in a sedan-chair, Barère, the Anacreon of the guillotine, the man to whom the Terror appeared as a harsh diplomacy, Cambon, Baudot, Ramel, Cavaignac, had like David chosen Brussels for a city of refuge. Like hunted wild beasts, they had there found soil for their implacable hatreds, their long-standing rancours, refusing to abdicate and bow their heads.

David's position was soon prominent among that clan of rebels, and the reports of M. de la Tour du Pin, the

French Ambassador at Brussels, certainly destroyed the effect of the petition drawn up in Paris by David's pupils in favour of his return.

The studio of the painter of Marat became the meeting-place of the regicides. Once upon a time pretty women in Paris paid the entrance-fee to his studio that they might come and admire for many hours at a stretch the virile nudities of the picture of the "Sabine women," or of "Leonidas at Thermopylæ." This was no longer the case. He now exhibited "Mars disarmed by Venus and the Graces," which Vadier valued highly, and "Telemachus and Eucharis," which Cambon admired.

Political painting and civic pictures gave place to "Eros leaving Psyche" at the time when Louis XVIII caused the "Consecration at Notre-Dame" and the "Distribution of the Eagles" to be hidden away in the lumber-rooms of the Louvre. His art took on more charm, developed more gracefulness. He remembered he had had Boucher and Vien for his masters; the fat, heavy beauty of Flanders seemed to him less odious than it did at the time when he accused Rubens of "painting rotten flesh."

Without giving up his political ideal he gradually became detached from the rivalries of the Conventionals who were his fellow-countrymen in exile. M. Jules Claretie has given us a very curious anecdote about General Chazal, the son of the Conventional, which reveals the state of feeling among the banished politicians.

"The future General Chazal," he relates, "when he was still a very small child, was playing in one of the avenues of the Park at Brussels when his hoop happened



to knock up against the legs of a tall old man who was sitting meditatively on a bench. The child made excuses ; the old man took the hoop instinctively in his knotty fingers, and before returning it started talking with the boy whom he admired. The looks of old people seem to seek for a little of their past in the bright eyes of children. They are rejuvenated by their youthfulness. And the old man smiled at the child's prattle.

'What's your name?' inquired the man at last.  
'Yes, the name of your papa?'

'Chazal, sir.'

'Chazal!'

The old man's face suddenly lowered at the name, his eyebrows were knitted in a frown.

'Chazal, the old Conventional?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Well, then,' said the man, who had grown savage-tempered, 'you will tell him, your father, that you met somebody who regrets he did not have him executed, and you will add that it was Vadier who told you that!'

Vadier! The boy ran off, taking his hoop with him and turning back to have one more glance at that thin, terrible old man who made him frightened. When he reached his father's house little Chazal was still quite excited and trembling. He at once hurriedly told his adventure to the ex-Conventional, who like Vadier was an exile.

'You don't know,' said the child, 'I met in the park an old gentleman who told me his name was Vadier and that he greatly regretted——'

But Chazal did not allow the boy to finish his sentence :

'Vadier!' he broke in, 'Vadier! There's a fellow I am sorry I did not see mounting the scaffold!'

And little Chazal noticed in his father's anger the same tone of concentrated violence which had just before terrified him in old Vadier's speech. The proscribed Conventionals went on hating each other despite exile, despite lapse of years, like the warriors of Scandinavian legends who continued fighting even after their deaths."<sup>1</sup>

David lived in exile nine years. He had become, we are told, gloomy, thin-skinned. Already disfigured as he was by the tumour which made his cheek swollen, his excessive thinness during his last years had contributed to turn him into a sort of fleshless ghost. And thus he met his death on 25th December, 1825.

There was a kind of national mourning in the land of his banishment. Something greater than the Terrorist of '93 had just passed away: an artist, and it was on the artist that Brussels bestowed a solemn and triumphal funeral ceremony, such as David himself would have liked to have arranged, David who had designed the burial of Jean-Paul Marat by night in the Pantheon, and that of Lepelletier de Saint-Fargean, who thus joined the company of the famous Mirabeau.<sup>2</sup>

Brussels deemed David's remains to be worthy of a fine tomb, and the regicide's body was laid in its last resting-place under a flagstone in the Church of Sainte-Gudule. It was left in peace till the day when a proposal was made to restore it to France. But the Restoration

<sup>1</sup> "Revue de la Révolution Française," February, 1893.

<sup>2</sup> Lepelletier de Saint-Fargean, a Conventional from the Yonne Department, was murdered 20th January, 1793, at the Restaurant Février at the Palais Royal by a King's guardsman called Deparis. He had voted for Louis XVI's death and fell a victim of his vote. The Convention decreed his body should be laid in the Pantheon.

had exiled the Conventional, and it exiled his corpse, and it was left to Béranger to sing the avenging song :

“ Non, non, vous ne passerez pas !

Dit le soldat avec furie.

Soldat, ses yeux jusqu'au trépas

Se sont tournés vers la patrie.

Non, non, vous ne passerez pas !

Dit le soldat ; c'est ma consigne.

Du plus grand de tous les soldats

Il fut le peintre le plus digne.

Non, non, vous ne passerez pas !

Dit le soldat devenu triste.

Ce héros, après cent combats,

Succombe, et l'on proscrit l'artiste.”

And the corpse of the “ blood-drinker ” of '93 did not pass.



# THE TRAGEDY OF THE PEOPLE'S FRIEND

## I. A STRANGE DOCTOR

ON 24th June, 1777, the gatekeeper at the Count d'Artois's<sup>1</sup> magnificent mansion witnessed the arrival of a curious personage.

Although only five feet high, he carried his head proudly. It was broad and bony, thin-lipped, brown-skinned. Unkempt brown hair fell on the collar of his shabby jacket, and a sword dangled against his thin calves. To sum up, a pitiful-looking individual, whose aspect inspired simultaneously a sort of repugnance, disgust and contempt. His brilliant eyes, full of fire, were not on the same horizontal line, because one of his cheekbones was higher than the other. A kind of pride, scorn and haughtiness animated the strange visage, thanks to which, when once seen, it could never be forgotten.

The majestic gatekeeper saw him approaching and got ready to dismiss him without ceremony, when the visitor declared :

“ I desire to see His Highness.”

<sup>1</sup> The Count d'Artois, born at Versailles on 9th October, 1757, emigrated and bore arms against France during the Revolution. The Vendéan Charette wrote about him to the Count de Provence : “ Sire, your brother's cowardice has ruined everything,” alluding to his equivocal behaviour. In September, 1824, on the death of Louis XVIII, he was proclaimed King of France. He fled at the time of the revolution of 1830 and died at Goritz, in Austria, on 6th November, 1836.

What! That suspicious-looking, broken-down loafer, shabbily dressed, with that ugly face, claimed to approach the Count d'Artois, the King's brother! A good joke indeed! And the majestic gatekeeper, appreciating fully the jest, thought well to derive some amusement from it.

He laughed a hoarse laugh, with an exaggerated want of respect :

" And what name shall I have the honour of sending in to Monseigneur ? "

The little man rose on tiptoe, drew up his slender figure and said, with his hand on his sword-hilt :

" Announce the Chevalier de Marat."

The smile faded from the gatekeeper's lips. Had he made a mistake? Was this wastrel really a Chevalier? And might he claim the honour of being admitted to the presence of the Count d'Artois? He was undecided. Doubtless annoyed by his hesitation, the little man added in a voice through which his pride penetrated :

" I am the new doctor of Monseigneur's bodyguard. Let His Highness be informed."

The gatekeeper bowed, realising it would be dangerous to prolong any more a sorry joke which might cost him dear.

Who, pray, was this singular savant, this Marat, whom the Count d'Artois had just appointed doctor to his bodyguard? To begin with, was he really a Chevalier, and had he a right to the title with which he adorned himself? Nothing is less certain, and the new doctor's true name was simply Jean Paul Marat.

The document of his birth in the baptismal registers of the parish of Boudry, in the county of Neuchâtel

(Switzerland), declared him to be the "son of M. Jean Mara [*sic*], an immigrant from Cagliari, in Sardinia, and of Madame Louise Cabrol, of Geneva; born 24th May, baptised 8th June, 1743, having no godfather and having as godmother Madame Cabrol, the child's grandmother."

That was he who was to become one day the People's Friend, the Conventional, the terror of the aristocrats, and was to die by a woman's hand.

His father, Jean Mara, owing to circumstances which are not very clear, even to-day, had been forced to go and establish himself at Geneva, where he had made the acquaintance of a handsome young woman, Louise Cabrol. They fell in love, married and had three children. The first was Jean Paul, the second a daughter, lastly another son. It was they who later on added a "t" to their name, doubtless in order to give it a more French spelling, or for some other reason of no particular import.

What was the character of this young man for whom the future reserved so great a rôle, in the front rank among the personages of the French Revolution? He tells us himself, and it is in his own paper, the *Journal de la République Française*, that we find the *Portrait de l'Ami du Peuple, tracé par lui-même*. He says:

"Born with a sensitive soul, a fiery imagination, an exuberant, frank, tenacious character, an upright spirit, a heart open to all lofty passions, and especially to the love of glory, I never did anything to alter or destroy those gifts of nature, and I did everything to cultivate them. The only passion that devoured my soul, when I was quite young, was the love of glory; but it was as yet only a fire that glowed beneath the embers. . . . From my earliest years, I was eaten up with the love of glory, a passion which often changed its object in the



various periods of my life, but never deserted me for an instant. At five I should have liked to be the master of a school, at fifteen a professor, at eighteen an author, at twenty a creative genius, just as to-day my ambition is to sacrifice myself for my country."

It may readily be conceived that with such a temperament his youth was bound to be adventurous, passionate and fertile in a thousand incidents.

His father intended him for the medical profession, and he joyfully accepted the decision which sent him to continue his studies at Toulouse and Bordeaux. During two years this thin, melancholy-looking youth might have been seen attending with truly remarkable assiduity the lectures of his professors and attacking at the same time the most diverse branches of human knowledge. He studied philosophy, literature, politics, the sciences, absorbing the most-varied knowledge, up to the day when he went and settled in Paris in 1751.

He was then eighteen, the age of all illusions and all warm hopes. But there are no more illusions for Jean Paul Marat, brought up on philosophy and sociology. He has one sole hope : glory. Remember his confession. For fourteen years, from London to Dublin, from Edinburgh to The Hague, from Amsterdam to Utrecht, he seeks the fame which is denied him and which he pursues all the more ardently. In 1774 he publishes a book, "*Chânes de l'Esclavage*," which puts him in difficulties at first with the English Government ; and he has himself enrolled as a Mason in the lodge of "The Free Accepted Masons" on 15th July of the same year.

This Masonic diploma was sold among an admirable collection of documents relating to the Revolution in 1862. It was a folio document, on vellum, signed by the

Grand Secretary, "Ja. Heseltine." It was endorsed by an autograph certificate signed: "E. P. Renouard," secretary of the Lodge Bien Aimée, of Amsterdam, testifying that Brother Jean Paul Marat had visited the Lodge, 12th October, 1774. On 30th June, 1775, we find him at the University of St. Andrews, in Scotland, where he receives the degree of Doctor of Medicine.

He returns to his wandering life for some months, then comes and settles in Paris, decrees himself the title of "Doctor of Incurables," intrigues, agitates, bustles about, gets himself recommended, and one fine morning receives the following brevet, which overwhelms him with delight:—

"To-day, 24th June, 1777, Monseigneur the Count d'Artois being at Versailles, on the report made him as to the upright life and conduct, the knowledge and experience in the medical art of the Sieur Jean Paul Marat, doctor of medicine of several faculties in England, wishing to bestow on him a mark of his goodwill, Monseigneur has granted him and grants him the position of doctor to his guards.

Wishing and intending that the said Sieur Marat should enjoy the honours, prerogatives and advantages that may attach to it, and that he may be qualified for them in all public and particular acts:

And for an assurance of his will, Monseigneur has commanded me to despatch this present brevet, which is signed with his own hand, and commands me to counter-sign, his Councillor in his Councils, Secretary of his commands, his Household Finances and his Cabinet."

The berth, whilst carrying with it two thousand livres in salary, in allowances for board and lodging, at the same time gave the new doctor a room in the offices of the

stables of the Hôtel d'Artois, in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré.

Now that he is installed in his new post he busies himself about his title of nobility. Being the servant of a very high and very powerful prince, it is important he should be noble himself likewise, in order not to bring a stain on the princely household. He writes to the Chief of the Heraldry Office at the time when the revision of the nobility is occurring :

" Have you received my letter ? If you have, I hope you will not reject my armorial bearings, seeing how assured is my family's nobility in Spain as well as in France. The post I now occupy, which can only be enhanced by the confidence bestowed on me by Monseigneur, makes this affair one in the interests of Society. It is to the honour of the State that the origin of a servant of the Prince's should be established by assured documents, such as I have not omitted to furnish."

At this epoch the Sieur Marat is a fervent Royalist, a servant who wishes to be worthy of the masters who agree to employ him. From 1779 to 1784 he publishes six books. Some he dedicates to the King, some he offers to the Queen. His activity finds vent in all kinds of ways. Not content with speaking fluent English, Italian, Dutch, German, he wants to show that the exact—i.e. hermetic—sciences are as familiar to him as foreign languages. Optics, physics, electricity, aerostatics are in turn the subject of his studies. He declares the steering of balloons to be possible, and the future has proved him to be right. He loves Racine, he admires Newton. And his books go on appearing. Their titles are curious, because they throw much-needed light on the figure of



the man who remains in the popular idea the "scoundrel" anathematised by Michelet.

Thus he publishes :

In 1773, "Essai philosophique sur l'homme."

In 1774, "Les Châines de l'esclavage."

In 1779, "Découvertes de M. Marat, docteur en médecine, sur le feu, l'électricité et la lumière."

In 1780, "Recherches physiques sur le feu."

In 1781, "Découvertes sur la lumière."

In 1782, "Recherches physiques sur l'électricité."

In 1784, "Notions élémentaires d'optique."

In 1784, "Mémoire sur l'électricité médicale."

In 1787, "Optique de Newton."

In 1787, "Mémoires académiques sur la lumière."

In 1789, "Plan de législation criminelle."

Meanwhile, 23rd April, 1786, he has given up his berth as doctor to the bodyguard of the Count d'Artois. The States-General have been assembled. On 12th September, 1789, appears the first number of the *Ami du Peuple* (People's Friend), and henceforth a new personage is about to make his appearance amid the sinister gloom and first rumblings heralding the storm of '93.

## II. MARAT IN PARIS

THERE was at that time at No. 30 in the Rue des Cordeliers (to-day the Rue de l'Ecole-de-Médecine) a high, old four-storeyed house which was amongst those pulled down in June, 1877.

The courtyard of the house was narrow and sombre. At the left of the entrance, under a kind of vault, appeared a broad stone staircase with worked iron banisters. It was all grey, dingy, smelling of burning fat, infected with smells from the kitchens opening on the yard. The stair-

case was of damp, cold stone. On the first floor was a door, with an iron chain in the guise of a bell-pull. The People's Friend had gone to live there after a thousand incidents we shall have to relate.

Three rooms in these apartments gave upon the street : the bedroom, the drawing-room and the study. The kitchen opened into the ante-room and was lit up—if you could call a dim and uncertain gleam of light illumination—by a big sheet of glass giving on to the staircase. By the side of the kitchen three other rooms came in a row, the first of which served as a dining-room, the second as a bedroom for Catherine Evrard, sister of Simonne, Marat's mistress, and the third as a bathroom.

The bathroom was more like a kind of very dark lumber-room, for it was only lighted by a window opening on the courtyard. The bath was in the form of a sabot, which considerably economised the water, and we have to remember that at this period it had to be brought up to the different floors and paid for according to a tariff varying from one to two sols per bucket. This bath, of beaten copper, was placed against the light, Marat turning his back to the window. The position allowed of the light falling on the small table on which the invalid worked at the editing of his famous journal, the *Ami du Peuple*, or at the correcting of the proofs which were brought him by a commissionaire in his service, Laurent Bas. By the side of the bath was a stool on which the visitor sat ; that same stool which Charlotte Corday held in such repugnance at her last tragic visit.

The other rooms were comfortably furnished. Madame Roland in her " *Mémoires* " has left us a description of Marat's drawing-room, which deserves to be quoted here, because it tends to nothing less than to demonstrate—

perhaps by the absurdity of it—that the demagogue's slovenly and shabby mode of life was more apparent than real.

“ Now, let us have a look at his lodgings,” writes Mme. Roland, “ it is a lady who is about to describe them. Her husband, a member of the revolutionary tribunal, is detained at La Force prison for not being of the same opinion as the dominating party ; she herself has been confined in the Sainte-Pélagie, it is said as a measure of safety, but probably because they are afraid of the entreaties of that little woman from the South. Born at Toulouse, she has all the vivacity of the ardent climate in which she first saw the light ; and being tenderly attached to a cousin of amiable countenance she was desolated by his arrest a few months ago.

She had given herself much useless trouble, and no longer knew to whom to address herself, when she conceived the idea of going to Marat. She sends in her name : is told he is not at home ; but he hears a woman's voice and presents himself in person. He had on his legs boots without stockings, wore an old pair of skin pants, a vest of white taffeta ; his dirty, open shirt exposed to view a yellowish chest ; long, filthy nails were marked at the tips of his fingers, and his hideous face was a perfect accompaniment to the bizarre costume.

He takes the lady's hand, conducts her into his very fresh-looking drawing-room, upholstered in blue and white damask, decorated with silk curtains elegantly draped, with a brilliant chandelier and superb porcelain vases filled with natural flowers, rare at that time and costly. He sits beside her on a voluptuous ottoman, listens to the tale she tells him, interests himself in her,



kisses her hand, presses her knees a little and promises her her cousin's liberty. 'I should have let him do anything,' said the little woman jocularly, in her Toulouse accent, 'if I could go and have a bath afterwards, provided he restored my cousin to me.' The same night Marat was at the committee meeting and the cousin left the Abbaye prison next day; but within twenty-four hours the Friend of the People wrote to the husband, sending on to him a person for whom he required a service to be done which it was as well not to refuse."

We must evidently not take very literally the picturesque description of Madame Roland, for whom Marat embodied the bloodthirsty spirit of the Revolution, and to whom she did not fail to attribute responsibility for the fall of the Girondins, proscribed by the *coup d'état* of 31st May, 1793. Still, so far as her portrait of him goes, she is quite in agreement with most of his contemporaries. They all saw him, with his head wrapped in a handkerchief, his scanty hair over a wrinkled brow, his looks fiery, nervous, frenzied, wild, cynical, animated by a kind of fury that inflamed his cheek-bones and made him delirious. Of a truth, the various persecutions he had had to undergo had embittered his character, had made him full of hate and violence, but it is precisely that which can and ought to be the excuse of the much-calumniated Conventional.

Jean Paul Marat's bath played a big part in his life. We may recall here the fact that it was while he was enjoying the soothing freshness of the water that Charlotte Corday's knife dealt the mortal blow.

The question quite naturally arises: Why had Marat so frequent a need of baths? Dr. Cabanès, who

studied the illness with which the People's friend was afflicted, concluded he had a generalised eczema. It was an awful affliction for a man of Marat's extraordinary nervousness. The malady, which at first was hardly marked, assumed a more pronounced character in 1792 and reached its highest point in 1793. It caused him intolerable itchings which he could only soothe by plunging himself for whole days in the sedative water of his copper sabot. It was in his bath that he worked, that he edited his paper and wrote those inflamed and incendiary harangues, in which he cried for bleeding hecatombs ; it was there too that he gave audience, that he received visitors ; it was there that Charlotte Corday found him on a fine heat-laden July evening.

From this state of illness M. Jean de Bonnefon has drawn the text of a specious argument declaring that " the poniard of Mademoiselle Charlotte Corday d'Armont only hastened imminent death by a few days." And he follows up this theory (a hazardous one, to say the least of it) by a little sketch, in which he gives free rein to his fertile imagination.

" The tribune, when he was murdered [he writes], was in such a condition of putrescence that whenever he left his bath he would roll on the ground, distracted by the itchings of the prurigo. It was immured in organs that did not function. The members did not obey the will ; the scaly, gnawing ulcer had invaded the whole body ; there were hollow wounds on the arms, legs and chest. A bloody foam escaped from his nose, mouth and ears. The skull was wrapped up in a scarf of rags, the cheeks disappeared under a bandage of linen stained with blood and sanies. The large pupils of his lashless eyes, their lids ulcerated top and bottom, alone shone forth ; the

cold humours had not extinguished the fire of his glance ; mortal suffering had not hardened the incandescent lava of the ever-working brain."

That is Marat after the fashion of M. Jean de Bonnefon, a picture of decay worthy of an image-maker of the Middle Age, but having small relation here to historic truth. This Marat is he of legend, and not of reality. Generalised eczema has never produced in its victim the effects noted by M. Jean de Bonnefon in Marat. It is an outrageous fantasy, which nevertheless we have insisted upon reproducing so as to show to what extent everything touching the People's Friend has been denaturalised, disfigured. The reports of all medical men who were concerned in the exhumation of the corpse and Dr. Cabanès's studies have for a long time revealed the truth as to the tribune's real disease.

To speak plainly, Marat was not forgiven his natural ugliness. Danton himself was also hardly handsome, but Danton represented a growling, noisy, thundering athlete, and he is excused on account of the agitated, exciting life that emanated from his personality and his acts. Robespierre is not reproached with ugliness, because of his care to be elegant ; Marat alone is repulsed, condemned, because people seem to be angry with him for having wished to prove by his appearance that he was, better than in mere words, the Friend of the People, of the sansculottes of the Reign of Terror.

### III. THE PEOPLE'S FRIEND PERSECUTED

How did Jean Paul Marat attain the enormous and noisy popularity which enveloped him like a storm, caused yelling groups to collect beneath his windows in the Rue



des Cordeliers and to carry him in triumph in the midst of a delirious people ?

The fact is that the populace imagined, rightly or wrongly, that its Friend had suffered, was still suffering, on its behalf, and that his love for the cause of the sans-culottes was the sole cause of his persecution, yesterday by the King, to-day by the Girondins.

The ups-and-downs of his public and political life are too romantic to escape being recounted. The writer has no need to infuse liveliness into them ; they suffice for themselves, these adventures of a tracked journalist, whom nothing tires, and who still defies his enemies from the recesses of the cellars that serve him as a refuge.

For him there were only two classes : the rich and the poor. He was for the poor, and that was his whole programme. Everything that issued from his pen after 1789 was summed up in that, and it must be admitted that the ideal of charity and pity of which he proclaimed himself the Apostle, the Friend, the Defender, was worthy of the popular love which Paris lavished on him.

In order to reach this humanitarian ideal, one sole means seemed to Marat good and just—viz. to hew off heads, to hew off more heads, all guilty heads.

Then comes the day of the taking of the Bastille. Do you perhaps imagine that the People's Friend is going to rejoice in the promise of liberty that lights up the horizon of France ? In truth you would know him but ill. On that day he demands five hundred heads. Why ? In order to save the country. And how will those fallen heads save the country ? Marat does not say, and in reality the point is of little importance to him. Let five hundred heads fall and the country will be saved. There

is his programme. We have still to learn the methods by which he follows it out.

"A year ago," he writes, "five or six hundred chopped-off heads would have made you free and happy. To-day it would be necessary to chop off ten thousand. Within a few months perhaps you will chop off one hundred thousand, and you will act marvellously well ; for there will be no peace for you until you have exterminated the implacable foes of the country root and branch."

The extraordinary thing about this is not that Marat can write such atrocities, but that the people put faith in it, and believe in Marat as they once believed in the Bible. It is in fact a gospel he is preaching, but a gospel composed at one and the same time of terror, violence and red pity, which seems to be justified by the events.

Listen to him yet again, for it is important to let him speak in person in order to understand his system, in order better to penetrate the motive which is destined to arm Charlotte's hand with the knife :

"Stop losing time in imagining means of defence. There is but one remaining to you, that which I have recommended to you so many times : a general insurrection and popular execution. Were it necessary to cut off a hundred thousand heads we must not hesitate one moment. Hang, hang, my dear friends, that is the sole method of forcing your treacherous enemies to retreat within their own lines. If they were stronger than you, they would cut your throats without pity ; so stab them without mercy."

To speak the truth, these were direct incitements to murder and riot. Certainly the Government could not remain indifferent to such sanguinary appeals continually

repeated. The municipality of Paris, the Committee of Inquiries, the Tribunal of the Châtelet, the National Assembly set the police force on Marat's tracks. But if the People's Friend were high-flown in his ideas, he was also cautious, and hastened to gain the open. Then began for him the wandering life of a hunted, pursued, trapped animal. He ran to hide himself. Where? Among the sansculottes, his friends? No; he fled to a pretty woman of his day, the Citizeness Simonne Evrard, a modest working-woman. We shall soon see, in the chapter devoted to Marat's mistress, that there were women who took some pleasure in his company. It would, however, be puerile to believe that in their welcome of him they forgot he was the People's Friend and only remembered him as possessing the title of Chevalier, and having been attached to the princely house of the Count d'Artois. Women's instinctive sympathy does not go so far for its reasons. So the Citizeness Evrard offered him a refuge in her house. Although it was discreet and safe, Marat did not remain there long, and went off to Versailles, where Bassal, the vicar of the parish of Saint-Louis, gave him a charitable welcome. But the exile from Paris, the theatre of his popular triumph, could not long please a man who himself avowed his thirst and need for fame. He quitted the brave and worthy Bassal, and returned to Paris by night.

At this time there lived in the Rue des Cordeliers an ex-sailor who had become a butcher, the Citizen Legendre. He was a tall fellow of powerful build, very popular in his quarter, where the incendiary speeches he delivered at the tribune of the Cordeliers Club were repeated with enthusiasm.

They had seen Legendre at the head of the fighters in



several riots, and he brought into the strife the full force of his fists as a killer of oxen. It was he who, when named a deputy for Paris at the National Convention, later on, shouted to his colleague Lanjuinais, whose moderate speeches displeased him :

“ Come here and I'll knock you down ! ”

To which the witty Lanjuinais replied :

“ First get a decree that I am an ox ! ”

Legendre's popularity was derived, besides, from the friendship shown him by his neighbour, Danton, who then lived in the Cour du Commerce, a few steps from the stall where the fresh meat was bleeding. It was with this Legendre that Marat sought a new asylum, and Legendre was very happy to give hospitality to his hunted friend. He prepared him a refuge in his cellar, and there, by the light of a wretched candle, the People's Friend continued to indite his appeals to violence, insurrection and protective murder.

But being always haunted by fear, dreading to be arrested every moment, he soon deserted Legendre's cellar for a safer shelter.

This time it was the grottoes of the Convent of the Cordeliers that were chosen as a hiding-place for Jean Paul Marat. On the spot where the School of Medicine is situated to-day, a little in front of the Dupuybren Museum, which is installed in the former refectory of the religious, the convent buildings still stood in 1789. The so-called Cordeliers Club had there established its meeting-place, and there Danton, Hébert, the famous Father Duchesne,<sup>1</sup> and the orators of the district came and

<sup>1</sup> Hébert was the editor of a popular paper, *Le Père Duchesne, le véritable marchand de fourneaux* (the genuine dealer in furnaces), which was as violent as Marat's. He was guillotined, 24th March, 1794 (4 Germinal, Year II).

launched their reverberating challenges at the tottering monarchy.

In the convent gardens were grottoes, ornaments either natural or due to the active industry of the dispersed religious—it matters little which. The essential for Marat was to find a safe retreat there. It was among them that he went and chose his abode of refuge. Some devoted friends looked after his subsistence, and so things went on till the day when, the danger being over, Marat dared to reappear. He reappeared, and that was the signal for resuming in his paper a campaign not less insolent than that which had caused his first outlawry.

On 21st January, 1790, Boucher d'Argis, a councillor at the Tribunal of the Châtelet, signed a fresh decree of arrest against Marat :

“ You, the first usher or royal sergeant, on this warrant, at the request of the Procureur of the King, the demander and accuser, take and seize by the body in any part you may be able to find him, the Sieur Marat, and constitute him prisoner in the prison of the Châtelet.”

On 22nd January, riot and great uproar in the district of the Cordeliers. Two ushers and a commissary of the Châtelet appear in the street in which the People's Friend lodges. The way is barred by troops of the National Guard ; squadrons of cavalry thrust back the enraged mob, whilst detachments of artillery and infantry occupy the environs. A cry of wrath rises from the over-excited crowd :

“ They're arresting Marat !—Marat, the People's Friend ! ”

As a matter of fact they do not arrest Marat. Whilst the tocsin is sounding, the police are rummaging his house,

and the populace is howling, shouting and yelling, the Cordeliers Club assembles and takes Marat under its protection in virtue of its decree of 7th October, 1789, about the support to be given to men of letters and publicists in the interests of freedom. Danton is there, and Danton thunders. They discuss, they compromise, they threaten each other. Meanwhile Marat runs away, some say disguised as a grenadier, others dressed in an overcoat and a round hat. He will himself admit it later.

The Châtelet, however, does not thus let its prey slip. It prosecutes Danton as Marat's accomplice. The Châtelet is now attacking a stubborn fighter, and quickly perceives it, for all the journals conduct a vigorous campaign that ends in the abandonment of the prosecution. Once more Marat triumphs.

He has made up his mind to go to England, not caring much to renew his acquaintance with the damp darkness of the cellars. But the lesson has scarcely cured him. As soon as possible he despatches from London to Paris his bloodthirsty calls. On 18th May he returns; on 18th September police descend on the *Sieur André*, printer of the *Ami du Peuple*. They seize placards, newspapers; they dismount formes; they break up the arm-presses. Marat himself is again in flight. And the months pass, he always shouting forth his anger and the police ever in pursuit.

However, the day of his triumph is at hand. On 10th September, 1792, the people sends its Friend to sit as Deputy in the National Convention, with Georges Danton and Maximilien de Robespierre. Marat has finally attained glory, that glory so ardently desired, so keenly longed for and sought.

New thorns begin to grow on his laurels. On 12th April,



1793, Guadet<sup>1</sup> mounts the tribune of the Convention and reads out an appeal of Marat to the Departments. He there declares that "the counter-revolution is in the Government, in the National Convention," that his colleagues are traitors, and finally he invites the provincial sansculottes to arm and march against the criminals.

The effect of this quotation on the Convention may easily be guessed. The Girondins, directly attacked by the People's Friend, are the most violent. From all sides are heard furious cries :

"A decree of accusation against Marat ! Marat to the Abbaye !"<sup>2</sup>

Marat mounts to the tribune, repeats his charges. The cries redouble. The Convention decrees Marat's arrest. But from the tribunes descend some sansculottes, who proceed to form a kind of guard around the People's Friend. With them he walks towards the exit ; an attempt is made to stop them—useless pains. Marat's guard of honour carries off the accused, and yet once more Marat goes into hiding.

Next day he writes to the Convention that, being "the People's eye," he is bound to flee from the blows of his enemies. By two hundred and twenty votes to ninety-nine, the Convention carries the decree of accusation against Marat and summons him before the Revolutionary Tribunal, established by decree on the preceding 10th March in order to judge "without appeal and without

<sup>1</sup> Deputy of the Gironde in the Legislative Assembly and in the National Convention. Being included in the proscription of the Girondins he fled to Calvados, and then to Saint-Emilion, where he lay hid at his father's house. They came to arrest him there and took him to Bordeaux. Declared an outlaw by the Convention, his identity was established, and he was sent to the scaffold.

<sup>2</sup> The Abbaye prison used to occupy the actual site of the Place Saint-Germain-des-Prés. The massacres of prisoners took place there on 2nd September, 1792.

recourse to the Tribunal of Cassation all traitors, conspirators and counter-revolutionaries."

On Tuesday, 23rd July, Marat reappears and goes and gives himself up at the Conciergerie. He has posters stuck on the walls of Paris in which he briefly announces :

" People, to-morrow your incorruptible defender presents himself before the Revolutionary Tribunal."

The people take care not to miss the rendezvous. From eight o'clock in the morning a huge throng circulates in the outskirts of the Palais de Justice, fills the corridors, the hall of audience. It is a vast billow, undulating, flowing alongside the ancient buildings, and it fills them with its murmuring noise. Outside, a thousand voices are intoning the hymn of the " brave Marseillaises," the " Carmagnole " and the " Ça ira." At last, surrounded by some Conventionals, a colonel of the National Guard, the captain of a frigate and municipal officers, Jean Paul Marat, bareheaded, in a green frock-coat, appears before the Revolutionary Tribunal.

Montané occupies the presidential seat ; Fouquier-Tinville that of public prosecutor. As soon as he appears, the people acclaims its Friend and the President does not try at all to abate the enthusiasm which delays the commencement of the hearing.

Marat returns thanks, smiles, and calms the public with a gesture of his hand. Then turning to the jury he speaks :

" Citizens, it is not a guilty man who appears before you, it is the apostle and martyr of freedom ; it is only a group of factious intriguers who have brought a decree of accusation against me."

At these words shouting comes from the crowd :

" Down with the Girondins ! Down with the Bris-

sotins !<sup>1</sup> Long live the People's Friend ! Long live the Mountain ! ”

And the hearing of the case begins. A singular trial, in which there is hardly any talk of the accusation brought against Marat, in which his foes are put on the punishment-seat, and the Girondins appear to be the accused and Marat the accuser ! There is a hearing of witnesses who know naught about the affair or are content to sing the praises of the accused. At last he rises himself, in order to deliver his defence. He accuses his accusers, he pronounces a regular requisitory against them. The peroration is welcomed with applause, and it is as a pure matter of form, out of simpler espect for the formalities of procedure, that the President puts three questions to the jury :

“ 1. Is it a fact that in the writings entitled *Ami du Peuple*, by Marat, and the *Publiciste*, the writer has cited (1) to plunder and murder ; (2) a power derogating from the sovereignty of the people ; (3) the vilification and dissolution of the National Convention ?

“ 2. Is Jean Paul Marat the author of those writings ?

“ 3. Did Jean Paul Marat, in the said writings, have criminal and counter-revolutionary intentions ? ”

The attitude of the public in the audience, the complaisance of the President, everything pointed in advance to the jury's verdict.

After deliberating three-quarters of an hour they returned to the hall, and the foreman, Citizen Dumont,

<sup>1</sup> The Convention was divided into three groups : the Girondins, also called the Rolandists ; the Mountaineers ; and the waverers designated under the name of the Plain or Marsh. When the Mountain had upset the Gironde, it engaged in a struggle against a fraction of its own party, the Dantonists. The Robespierrists triumphed till 9 Thermidor, Year II (27th July, 1794), the day on which the Plain, led by Tallien, Barras and others, upset them in turn.



declared with his colleagues that the points were not established. On the requisition of Fouquier-Tinville asking for an acquittal, the judges allowed it, and the people's victorious and triumphal clamour was the answer.

The People's Friend had emerged victorious from the dangerous judicial ordeal.

A hundred hands, a thousand hands, were stretched out towards the acquitted man, seized his wrists, raised him above their heads, carried him across the great gallery of the palace, whilst acclamations and "bravos" resounded on every side. The bare head of the People's Friend was crowned with oak and laurel, and so the procession left the Palace of Justice and reached the Quai de l'Horloge, which was black with the crowd.

On that beautiful spring morning the procession forms, swells, spreads, extends across the narrow lanes of this corner of old Paris. The streets are full, are soon overflowing. It is impossible to escape from the grimy sea and the populace struggles on, yells, cries, claps its hands and acclaims "the incorruptible defender of its rights," now free and triumphantly luxuriating in the applause that awaits and greets him.

All Paris is there, frenzied, happy, enthusiastic. The People's Friend is free, acquitted! Flowers are thrown to him from the windows, women smile at him, men weep with joy. Here Marat can see his power, can see with what love the people encircle him!

And then, beneath the radiant sun illuminating that day, the cortège marches on.

They have seated him in an arm-chair supported on men's shoulders. The chair is seen slowly to advance, ever acclaimed by the human billow which murmurs

under the lovely April sky, radiant and clear. Voltaire one day experienced such a triumphal escort. And the shouts are ever rising and the flowers are still raining. The procession wends its way towards the Convention by the Rue Saint-Honoré, where all traffic is suspended, so dense is the crowd. Marat smiles to the people, places his hand on his heart. They steadily go forward. Then suddenly they stop before the Convention. The procession penetrates the meeting-hall, applauded by the Mountain, whilst the Gironde is silent, feeling what an awful blow the acquittal will be for it.

Marat mounts the tribune, and after obtaining silence speaks in an oppressed, staccato voice, trembling with the intoxication of fame :

“ Legislators, I have been treacherously inculpated ; a solemn judgment has caused my innocence to triumph. I bring back a pure heart to you, and I shall continue to defend the rights of man, of the citizen and of the people, with all the energy Heaven has given me ! ”

And the voice of the Mountain, and the voice of the people acclaim Marat, Marat triumphant.

He had only three months more to live.

#### IV. CHARLOTTE CORDAY IN NORMANDY

IN those days there lived in the sad, grey town of Caen a bizarre young woman.

She was tall, rather stout, possessing abundant chestnut hair descending in curls on the nape of her neck, in 1791 fashion. Her eyes were a pale blue, her nose, though rather long, had a noble curve, and her voice, gracefully modulated, was a caress to the ear.

Thus endowed with the riches of beauty and elegance,

she might have kept the hearts of the people about her smitten with her charm ; but this sharp young woman seemed to have made it her task to repel the most obstinate, to discourage the most confident.

She was Marie Anne Charlotte de Corday d'Armont. One morning a carriage had stopped before an old house in ancient Caen, called the Grand Manoir, inhabited by an old lady, Madame de Bretteville. From the carriage descended a tall young woman. Introduced into Madame de Bretteville's presence, she gave her name.

" I am Mademoiselle d'Armont, your relative."

And she added that, being at Caen on some small business, she hoped her aunt would agree to put her up.

Madame de Bretteville was avaricious, homely, wrapped in small habits of life ; but how could she refuse hospitality to a relation who thus suddenly dropped on her from the skies ?

She was a very curious little woman, this Madame de Bretteville, all wrinkled, all in folds, trotting softly through her silent house. She was the daughter of M. le Coutelier de Bonnebos, one of the most scoundrelly libertines of his time, a sort of Don Juan grown grey in the harness of gallantry. In his house mistresses succeeded mistresses, and it must be admitted that he gave his daughter some singular company. But little cared he for that, the ardent M. le Coutelier de Bonnebos ! At that time, as even to-day, mistresses used to revel wantonly in gold and silver. That too was the fate of the gallant Norman's revenues. These breaches into his income, daily growing bigger, had prevented him from giving his daughter a dowry, and the eligible men had deserted this house of love when the already faded



graces of an improbable bride no longer sufficed to retain them.

However, M. le Coutelier de Bonnebos grew old, whilst always gaily making fresh conquests. Certainly, he could not put off dying, and it was full of that charitable thought that M. de Bretteville, a small country gentleman of the neighbourhood, came and paid court to the daughter of the impenitent libertine. He married Mademoiselle le Coutelier de Bonnebos and preserved his soul in patience.

The gallant gentleman, however, was not resigned to dying. M. de Bretteville was getting old ; his wife was getting old ; they were both desperate in the expectation of the heritage, and wretched poverty had slowly, gradually entered their household, the more keenly felt because a daughter had been born.

"Go and marry heiresses !" grumbled M. de Bretteville. "Suffer for ages all the torments of indigence, in order that you may get something to eat when you have no more teeth left !"

To which Madame de Bretteville bitterly retorted :

"But still, I can't kill my father !"

In fact, the old rascal did not seem disposed to lay down the leadership of his gallant band. That went on for seventeen years, when, on a certain day in Lent, a double misfortune struck the Bretteville family. The young daughter died at Caen and M. le Coutelier de Bonnebos married at Paris !

Improbable as the thing appeared to be, it was so. The old gallant was eighty-nine, and his new wife—a former mistress—seventy-six.

M. de Bretteville was dumbfounded at the disastrous and stupefying news, whilst his wife groaned :



CHARLOTTE CORDAY  
From a portrait by Brard





“ Alas ! I thought to have lost my father and married my daughter, and the contrary has happened ! ”

But their long patience was destined to have its reward. M. le Coutelier de Bonnebos died six months later, powerless no doubt to resist his new marriage. He left his wife a large sum of money, and forty thousand livres income to his daughter, without counting furniture and diamonds of considerable value.

The worthy M. de Bretteville went wild with delight at this stroke of luck. But if joy frightens, it sometimes also does worse. It killed M. de Bretteville at the moment when he was reckoning up all the pleasures and all the blessings which were going to be procured for him by this legacy he had so long waited for. So his wife remained alone in the old house, timorous at so much wealth, and always fearing some fresh surprise of Fate. She did not change at all her manner of living, keeping jealous watch over her unexpected fortune, with extraordinary greediness. Cantankerous, suspicious, she had already been leading that kind of life for some time when suddenly there came and installed herself in the house her niece, a very remote relation too, who recalled her name to her : Corday d'Armont.

Her arrival, however, which seemed mysterious to old Madame de Bretteville, was hardly very strange.

Marie Anne Charlotte de Corday d'Armont was the daughter of a poor gentleman, and was born in 1768 at Saint-Saturnin in the Orne Department. The family consisted of two sons and two daughters. The two sons were killed, in June, 1794, in the fight at Quiberon ; the younger of the daughters was lame, the elder was she who killed the People's Friend. The family lived in the strictest economy, and it was therefore a disaster for

them when Madame d'Armont died after giving birth to a fifth child.<sup>1</sup> So the father remained alone with the four children. The elder of his daughters was not yet fifteen.

There was then near Caen a convent, L'Abbaye aux Dames, directed by Madame de Belzunce, who had as assistant Madame Doulcet de Pontécoulant. The nuns were moved by the painful situation created for the young orphan girls, and proposed to the father to take charge of their education. So Charlotte and her sister entered the convent of L'Abbaye aux Dames. Years sped on ; events were precipitate and the Revolution, shutting up the convents, restored the two girls to their father.

Charlotte had hardly returned to her childhood's home, when she at once displayed the character she always had, stubborn, nurtured on the example of ancient virtues. That was the origin of her disagreements with her father and the cause of her arrival at Madame de Bretteville's house at Caen.

Accordingly she settled down in the house pompously called the Grand Manoir. It was a two-storeyed building, with three windows, old, gloomy, damp and morose, like so many provincial houses. The entrance to it was across a small court paved with blocks of sandstone. The gate itself was low and narrow, and the passage to which it gave access was dark, and ended in a spiral staircase leading to the different floors. In fact, a mediocre, dull lodging.

Charlotte established herself on the second floor. The

<sup>1</sup> We have stated that Charlotte Corday's sister was lame. We may add that her mother was one-eyed, and—a curious fact—her brother, M. de Ménival, was deprived of the same eye. These details are given us in the memories of one of Charlotte's friends from childhood, Madame de Maromme.

room was low and sombre, obtaining light from two barred windows, each giving on to the courtyard. A high, broad chimney-piece occupied a whole side of the wall, and the furniture was poor, ugly, mean. It was thence that she was one day to depart to fulfil her tragic destiny.

A friend of Charlotte has left us a portrait of her at this epoch which may be taken as a fair likeness :

" She was of a dazzling whiteness and of the most wonderful freshness. Her complexion had the transparency of milk and the velvetiness of the peach ; the tissue of her skin was of a rare fineness. She would blush very readily and became then truly ravishing. Her eyes were well-set and very beautiful, although a little veiled. Her chin had something of what is called 'obstinacy' in it, but the whole was charming and full of distinction. The expression of the beautiful face was one of unspeakable sweetness, even like the sound of her voice : never was seen a look more angelic, more pure, more candid, nor a smile more attractive. Her hair, a light chestnut, harmonised perfectly with the tone of her skin ; in a word, she was a superb woman, though a trifle heavily built. Her carriage was bad, her head bent slightly forward, and we often used to chaff her about it ; she would smile and promise to act on our advice ; but if she tried to do so, her efforts were quite without success."

Such is the image as seen by contemporaries of her who was about to become a murderess, and was destined, with the knife in her hand, and drenched with the blood of her victim, to appear before Revolutionary justice and the tribunal of history.



On the evening before the tragedy of which she is to be the heroine, it is perhaps interesting to note Charlotte Corday's familiar and intimate life in the old Norman house, by the side of Madame de Bretteville.

When her aunt received visits, she seemed uninterested in the gossip exchanged, lost in her dreams. However, when she did mingle in the conversation, she quickly revealed the nature of her thoughts, and the name of Rome often recurred in her talk. Rome was to her the ideal republic, the perfect city.

"But," she would say, "our nation is too light-minded: it has need of being rebaptised, regenerated, of seeking in the annals of the past for the tradition of the beautiful, the great, the true, the noble, and of forgetting all the frivolities that bring about the corruption and degeneration of peoples."

One may easily conceive the astonishment which was bound to be provoked by such opinions in the severe Royalist society, devoted to the old régime, which frequented the house of Madame de Bretteville.

Charlotte, however, seemed to remain indifferent to their readily comprehensible surprise. She was entirely absorbed in that civil and political ideal which was due to reading the literary productions of the epoch.

In fact, since Madame de Bretteville scarcely observed what she did, she used to read Plutarch, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Voltaire, all the writers who emancipated the spirit of the eighteenth century.

That did not come to pass without creating some scandal one day. Madame de Bretteville, with the object of reconciling Charlotte to her father, had invited the latter to dinner, together with his son. At the end

of the meal occurred the following incident, related by one of the guests :—

“ We were laughing and joking, and up till then all was going well, when finally somebody proposed the King's health. We all rose simultaneously except Mademoiselle d'Armont, who remained seated and left her glass standing on the table. ‘ To the King's health ! ’ we cried a second time. The same attitude and the same silence. M. d'Armont's brows darkened ; he lowered his eyes in visible dissatisfaction. My mother<sup>1</sup> touched the young person's arm in a friendly way, so as to induce her to get up. Mademoiselle d'Armont gazed at her with her usual calm and gentleness, but she did not budge.

‘ What, my child,’ whispered my mother to her, ‘ you refuse to drink to the health of Louis XVI, the King who is so good and so virtuous ? ’

‘ I believe he is virtuous,’ she replied, in that tone which was so sweet that it was a perfect harmony in itself ; ‘ but a weak king cannot be good ; he cannot prevent a people's misfortunes.’

An absolute silence succeeded the answer, and nothing could persuade her to drink with us.

I was in a rage, my mother had difficulty in hiding her ill-humour. . . . However, we drank our cherished toast none the less, then we sat down, each of us visibly become gloomy and out-of-sorts. Mademoiselle d'Armont assuredly did not try to displease us ; but, being frank and incapable of disguising her feelings, she would doubtless have blushed at an apostasy which the circumstances perhaps required, but the stubbornness of her character and the inflexibility of her principles did not

<sup>1</sup> It is Madame de Maromme who is speaking.

let her dissemble. However that may be, her opposition to her father's sentiments at a meeting for reconciliation purposes, her resistance to her friends' entreaties, were infinitely disagreeable to everybody, and the impression of uncomfortableness and chill which spread over all our faces and penetrated all our minds could not be lifted during the whole evening."

According to this anecdote it is once more apparent that Charlotte Corday was ardently, even savagely, republican. And so the question arises, a rather bewildering one for those who are unaware of the undercurrents of the crisis in which France was involved: Why, as a republican, did she kill a republican?

The explanation must be sought in the great and serious events that had taken place in Paris. A split had come to pass in the bosom of the National Convention between the party of the Gironde and the party of the Mountain. A formidable and deadly duel had begun between the Girondins Vergniaud and Brissot and the Mountaineers Danton and Robespierre. On 31st May, 1793, it had its epilogue: the Gironde was vanquished and proscribed. Whilst some were arrested in their homes, like Vergniaud, Boyer-Fonfrède, Fauchet, Valazé (who stabbed himself at the meeting of the Revolutionary Tribunal), others fled and reached Normandy and Caen, like the handsome Barbaroux, Guadet and Pétion, a former mayor of Paris.

These Conventionals, outlawed by their colleagues, had been lodged at the Intendance, which they had made their general quarters just as they had made Caen their rallying-point. From there they organised resistance to the Convention; they had chosen General Wimpfen to march at the head of their troops against Paris, and it



was also from there that they levelled at France their impious appeals to insurrection and civil war. Those advocates of Bordeaux did not seem to be conscious of the crime of which they were guilty against the Republic, their country and even against the unity of France.

From the Paris newspapers she received, which she bought or to which she was a subscriber, Charlotte Corday had followed events ; she had seen the Girondins floundering amid the difficulties they had helped to create ; she had seen their fall, their proscription, and, being herself a lover of her chimerical Roman republic, she had been smitten with admiration for these initiators of a not less chimerical republic.

So she saw the fugitives at Caen, she spoke to them, heard their complaints, their recriminations. In their talk the name of Jean Paul Marat occurred again and again, together with those of Danton and Robespierre. It was he whom they accused of their fall and their misfortune. These men who were abandoned by the people of Paris were undoubtedly angry, with a strong tenacious hatred, with a quite Southern resentment, at the man who had remained the People's Friend and whose reign tended every day to be more definitely established.

Thus, slowly but surely, Marat appeared in the eyes of Charlotte Corday to be the author of all the country's woes. In her opinion the Girondins alone could save France, establish liberty on a solid basis. Now, Marat had upset the Girondins. Nothing, as a matter of fact, could be falser, because the Girondins were themselves the inevitable cause of their own fall. But how could they admit it ?

"The man who was mentioned with the bitterest execration was Marat," writes M. Wallon in his "Histoire

du Tribunal révolutionnaire." "She believed that by killing him she would annihilate his faction and restore peace and happiness to France. Fatal error! A faction does not have its *raison d'être* in any one man. To strike the man is often the surest means of reviving the party; and, if the man is guilty, it is removing him from the punishment which the law alone can inflict with efficaciousness as well as with justice."

So it can be seen with what severity Charlotte Corday's deed is judged by writers the most inclined to indulgence.

To sum up, it may be said to-day that it was the proscribed Girondists at Caen who equipped the arm of the woman who may be called, according to others, an "astounding virago." In her poverty-stricken, dreary room in the Grand Manoir, the young Roman lady of Normandy took her terrible resolution. Mystery and silence have fallen for ever on the moments during which, in the peace of the summer nights, Charlotte Corday prepared herself for the murder.

## V. THE MURDER

WE are enabled to follow Charlotte Corday almost hour by hour up to the moment when she crosses the threshold of No. 30 in the Rue des Cordeliers.

All the details of the tragic adventure are apparent in the broad daylight of history, and it is perhaps one of the dramas of the Revolution in which nothing has remained obscure, bewildering, equivocal or unknown.

. . . . .

On Tuesday, 9th July, Charlotte has left Caen by the Paris diligence which starts at two o'clock in the after-

noon. Before deserting the solitary old house which she will never see again, she has addressed this letter to her father :

" I owe you obedience, my dear papa ; however, I am going away without your permission ; I am going away without seeing you, because I should feel too much grief. I am going to England because I do not believe that one can live happy and tranquil for very long in France. As I am going away, I put this letter in the post for you, and when you receive it I shall no longer be in this country. Heaven denied us the happiness of living together, just as it has refused us other things. It will perhaps be more lenient to our country.

Good-bye, my dear papa, kiss my sister for me and do not forget me.

9th July " (and then on the other side)

" CORDAY."

And now it is all over, the die is cast. Marat's fate is decided. But who would think it who watched this calm, this so strangely calm young woman gazing with a tranquil eye at the landscapes of her native province, as they went past the windows of the diligence ? There are by her side, opposite her, some men who do not spare her their oglings and gallant proposals. It is in the first letter she addresses to Barbaroux, from the prison of L'Abbaye, that she notes these details, that she reveals these trifling picturesque incidents which allow one to realise the occurrences on her journey.

" I was with some worthy Mountaineers [she writes], whom I let speak as much as they pleased, and their talk, which was as silly as their persons were disagreeable, helped me not a little to go to sleep. I woke up, so to



speak, in Paris. One of our travellers, who no doubt likes women asleep, took me for the daughter of one of his old friends, credited me with a fortune I do not possess, gave me a name I've never heard and wound up by offering me his fortune and his hand. When I was annoyed at his talk I said to him : ' We are playing at comedy perfectly well ; it is unfortunate with such talent not to have any spectators ; I am going to look after our travelling companions that they may take their part in the entertainment.' I left him in a very bad temper. During the night he sang plaintive songs, suitable to cause sleep. I quitted him at last in Paris, refusing to give him my address or my father's, of whom he wanted to ask my hand. He quitted me in a very bad temper."

It was not the same with Charlotte. She arrives in Paris fatigued, tired without doubt, but in a perfect good humour. The depositions of the witnesses are unanimous in acknowledging her to be always calm, mistress of herself. The two days' travelling have not altered her tranquillity at all, and have not caused terror and remorse for her next act to rise in her heart. On Thursday, 11th July, about noon, she descends into the courtyard of the diligence office, and whilst there trying to realise her position amid unknown surroundings and the noisiness of the travellers, a man slips a small piece of paper into her hand : an hotel circular. She looks at it.

She did not know where to go and had no idea as to an hotel. So she will go to the Hôtel de la Providence. She is conducted there forthwith, and the proprietress, Madame Grollier, has her luggage sent up to room No. 7.

The room is similar to all those used by travellers. It is grey, dreary, gloomy. A bed, a table, two chairs, a

toilet-table, a brick floor. That is the scenery in which the "Norman Virago" is about to live her last hours and her last night.

She thinks at first of having a rest, and whilst the hotel attendant is making the bed she gets information about the state of men's minds in Paris, what they think of the Girondins who have taken refuge in the Department of Calvados and especially in what kind of esteem "little Marat" is held. To which the attendant replies: "The patriots esteem him a great deal, but the aristocrats detest him." Thereupon she ponders, declares she wants to go to the Palais Royal, asks the way to it and goes out. She does not go there, however, and turns her step towards the Rue Saint-Thomas-du-Louvre, where at No. 41 lives Lauze de Perret, a Conventional of the Bouches-du-Rhône. She has a letter to hand him from Barbaroux, who has taken refuge, as we said, at Caen. It is then nearly ten o'clock. Lauze de Perret is at the Convention and will only return for supper. Charlotte leaves the letter and goes away. She returns to the Hôtel de la Providence and goes to sleep overwhelmed with fatigue. Her sleep lasts till the next day.

At ten o'clock she returns to Lauze de Perret. He has read Barbaroux's letter, recommending him to do what he can for Charlotte. She has some business to transact for one of her friends at the Ministry of the Interior. The two go there, but it is a sheer waste of time. They are asked to return in the evening at eight. So the young woman has the whole day before her. What is she going to do? Will she go and visit that Paris which in her imagination must have appeared to her, down there at Caen, like a town crushed by the Terror, reeking with the holocausts to Liberty? No. She leaves Barbaroux's friend, returns

to the Hôtel de la Providence, locks her door and writes. What, pray? The testament of her political faith. And in her small handwriting, round and firm, on a rough piece of paper, she inscribes the title :

“ ADDRESS TO THE FRENCH  
FRIENDS OF THE LAWS AND OF PEACE ”

A brief instant of respite. Of what does she think before casting on paper the reasons which will explain to France and to the world the motives for the murder that obsesses her? What visions fasten her memory? What does she regret? But she makes up her mind and writes without a quiver.

“ How long, O unhappy Frenchmen, will you find your pleasure in troubles and divisions? For a time long enough and indeed too long certain factious villains have substituted the interests of their ambition for the general interests. Why, O unfortunate victims of their fury, why should you cut one another’s throats, and annihilate yourselves in order to establish the edifice of their tyranny on the ruins of desolated France?

Factions burst forth on every side; the Mountain triumphs through crime and oppression, a few monsters, gorged with your blood, guide its loathsome plottings and lead us to the precipice by a thousand different roads.

We are working at our own destruction with more energy than we ever displayed in conquering liberty! Oh, people of France! A short time more and there will only remain of you the memory of your existence!

Already the Departments in their indignation are marching on Paris: already the fire of *Discord* and of civil war is attacking one half of this vast Empire;



there is still a means of extinguishing it, but this means must be promptly applied. Already the vilest of the scoundrels, Marat, whose name alone represents the image of all the crimes, as he falls beneath the avenging steel, makes the Mountain quiver and causes Danton and Robespierre to turn pale, those two other brigands sitting on that bleeding throne surrounded by thunderbolts, which the avenging gods of humanity doubtless only suspend over them in order to render their fall more startling, and to frighten all those who would be tempted to build their fortunes on the ruins of abused peoples !

Frenchmen ! you know your enemies, arise ! March ! Let the Mountain when annihilated only leave brothers and friends behind it ! I know not if Heaven is reserving for us a Republican Government ; but only in the excess of its vengeance can it give us as Master a Mountaineer.

O France ! your quiet depends on the execution of the law. I do not go counter to it by killing Marat ; condemned by the Universe, he is outside the law. What tribunal shall judge me ? If I am guilty, Alcides was also guilty when he destroyed the monsters ; but did he encounter monsters so hateful ? Oh, friends of humanity, you will not regret a ferocious wild beast battered on your blood ! and you, sad aristocrats whom the Revolution has not sufficiently spared, you will not regret him either ; we have nothing in common with him.

Oh, my country ! your misfortunes rend my heart ; I can only offer you my life, and I return thanks to Heaven that I am free to dispose of it ; nobody will lose by my death ; I shall not imitate Pâris<sup>1</sup> by killing my-

<sup>1</sup> The Pâris referred to here is he who murdered, in a cellar of the Palais Royal, the Conventional Lepelletier de Saint-Fargean, to punish him for having voted for death in the trial of Louis XVI.

self ; I wish my last breath to be useful to my fellow-citizens ; that my head, carried about Paris, may be a rallying token for all the friends of the laws, and that the tottering Mountain may see its ruin written with my blood ; that I may be their last victim, and that the avenged Universe may declare that I have deserved well of humanity. For the rest, if my conduct is viewed with a different eye, it troubles me little.

' Qu'à l'univers surpris, cette grande action  
Soit un objet d'horreur ou d'admiration,  
Mon esprit, peu jaloux de vivre en la memoire,  
Ne considère point le reproche ou la gloire :  
Toujours indépendant et toujours citoyen,  
Mon devoir me suffit, tout le reste n'est rien.  
Allez ! ne songez plus qu'à sortir d'esclavage !'<sup>1</sup>

My relations and friends ought not to be molested ; nobody knew my plans. I add my baptismal register to this address to show what can be done by the weakest hand directed by a whole-hearted devotion. If I do not succeed in my undertaking, Frenchmen, I have shown you the way ; you know your enemies, rise up, march and strike ! ”

One simple remark : Marat will be killed to-morrow for having launched at the rabble an appeal for the murder of the Girondins. When Charlotte Corday writes the above document, what is she doing but herself lamenting an appeal to murder, to violence, to assassination ? But is she not a woman ? And by that token she is but slightly familiar with logic.

When the address had been written we know nothing

<sup>1</sup> These seven lines, it is well known, occur in Voltaire's famous tragedy, *La Mort de Brutus*.

about what she does. She probably takes her last hours of rest. The next day, Saturday, she rises with the dawn. She leaves the Hôtel de la Providence very early, for she is seen about eight o'clock at the Palais Royal, where, whilst walking under the galleries in front of the shops, she notices a cutler. She enters, selects a knife for cutting up block-wood, asks the price, pays: three francs. That is the cost of the knife which is going to kill Marat. She then goes to his house in a cab. She engaged it at the Place des Victoires. At Marat's house she rings the bell, and Simonne Evrard comes to open the door. One may imagine from the declaration of Charlotte and the deposition of Simonne, the dialogue exchanged on the threshold.

"The citizen Marat?"

"This is his house."

"I should like to see him."

"Why?"

"I have to speak to him."

"What have you to say to him?"

"I have some very interesting things to tell him."

"What are they?"

"I can only tell it to him personally."

"He cannot receive anybody."

"But——"

"The People's Friend is ill."

"When ought I to come back?"

"I don't know. When he has recovered."

And the door is slammed in the visitor's face. Charlotte has nothing to do but to go away. And whilst the carriage is taking her back to the Rue des Vieux-Augustins, she reflects on the methods of approaching the People's Friend. She is a woman—that is to say, cunning—and the idea of duping Marat in the name of his love



for the people immediately springs up in her brain. She has scarce got up into her room again when she rapidly writes a note :

“CITIZEN,—I have come from Caen. Your love for the country leads me to suppose that you will be pleased to know the unhappy events in that portion of the Republic. I shall present myself at your house about one o’clock. Have the goodness to receive me and to grant me a moment’s interview. I shall put you into a position to render a great service to the country.”

She has this letter put into the local post, then in a tranquil frame of mind assuredly as to the fate awaiting her, and having decided on returning to the Rue des Cordeliers, she writes this other note, foreseeing fresh obstacles on the part of Simonne Evrard :

“I wrote to you this morning, Marat. Have you received my letter? May I hope for a moment’s audience? If you have received it, I hope you will not refuse me, seeing how interesting the matter is. Let it suffice that I am very unhappy, for me to have a right to your protection.”

She is unhappy! She has a right to the protection of the People’s Friend! She wants a moment’s audience! And she goes there, the knife in her pocket. In truth this time her visit is less futile. She penetrates even into Marat’s ante-room, but there she encounters one of the women folding the newspapers who calls Simonne Evrard. The noise of the dispute reaches even Marat. He asks about it. He is told the name of the visitor.

“Let her come in!”

And she goes in.

“I seem to see her before my eyes,” writes the Count d’Iderville in his book, “*Vieilles Maisons et jeunes*

Souvenirs," "I seem to see her standing up, trembling, leaning against this very door which our hands are touching. In spite of the man's invitation she has hesitated to seat herself on the stool set near the bath; her glance is fixed on the lascivious glance of the monster. She appears to us just as she then was, with her curls of fair hair scattered beneath the head-dress of the time; her chest panting beneath the covering fichu; her brown striped dress trailing on the damp floor. There she is, she gets up, speaks, gets excited, whilst the eyes of the viper light up at the thought of the new victims she is denouncing to him, prey for the executioner. At last she bends down——"

With a brutal blow Charlotte has buried the knife in him. "It has penetrated," says the official account of the autopsy, "between the first and the second rib, has traversed the upper part of the right lung as well as the aorta, and it has penetrated the left ventricle of the heart."

The murdered man has uttered a cry!

"Help! my dear friend!"

Simonne Evrard breaks in the door and slips.

Blood, blood everywhere, on the small table by the bath, on the scattered newspapers, on the walls, on the floor, everywhere stretches, red and sticky, the huge warm pool that has spurted from the hole dug in the invalid's chest.<sup>1</sup>

## VI. THE PENALTY

It was Simonne Evrard, as we have said, who, at the time of Charlotte Corday's first visit to the People's Friend, opposed her entry. When, on her second visit, Marat ordered the "virago of the Calvados," as the papers

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II, p. 328.

of the time call her, to be allowed to come into the bath-room, Simonne Evrard remained in its proximity, which enabled her to be the first to enter on the anguished cry of the murdered man.

As such, she became a valuable witness for the development of Charlotte Corday's trial, and they did not fail to summon her as one of the first witnesses. On 16th July she went and testified at the Maison de Justice before Judge Foucault, whose clerk, Anne Ducray, summed up in the following terms the evidence of Widow Marat :

" There appeared the Citizeness Evrard Simonne, aged twenty-seven years, living in the Rue des Cordeliers, No. 30 ;

Who declares that on Saturday, the thirteenth of the current month, about noon, a young person, whom she has since known to be called Marie-Anne-Charlotte Corday, presented herself in the ante-room of the apartment of the Citizen Marat, that this young person declared she had interesting and very urgent matters to communicate to the Citizen Marat, and that it was absolutely necessary for her to speak to him, that the witness refused her the entry of the room in which the Citizen Marat was, saying that he was very ill and that his position did not permit him to see anybody, that this young lady still continually insisted on the basis of the important secrets which she had to reveal to the Citizen Marat, that despite her pressure the witness always refused entry to this person, who went away asking her when she ought to return, if it should be in three or four days or a fortnight.

To which the witness answered her that she could not tell her the time or day at which she might return, that she even added that it was useless for her to come



back because she would not speak to her, seeing that she did not know when the said Marat would have recovered.

That this same person, in spite of the witness's reply, returned a second time the same day, but that the witness did not see her the second time, that finally the said Charlotte Corday wrote a letter to Citizen Marat which was handed him the same day ; that about half an hour after the Citizen Marat had read this letter, this young person presented herself for the third time at about eight o'clock, that she first of all addressed herself to the Citizeness Pain, who repeated to her the impossibility of her being introduced to the Citizen Marat, that this latter then ordered her to be sent in to him ; that the witness, who was then in the room of the Citizen Marat, bade the said Corday to enter and withdrew a little aside in the said room, in such a way as not to overhear the conversation with the Citizen Marat.

That the said Corday talked about a long quarter of an hour with the Citizen Marat, who at the moment was in his bath, clothed simply in a dressing-gown and engaged in writing down what Charlotte Corday was telling him on a little table arranged for this purpose on the bath.

That the sister of her, the witness, was at the moment occupied in crushing pieces of English earth for the use of the Citizen Marat ; that the witness told her she was crushing too much of it and went close to the Citizen Marat in order to show him the earth ; that the Citizen Marat told her that there was not too much of it, but that she might take away a small piece of it, that then she carried away the earth, which she handed back to her sister, and perceived at the same time two dishes on which were pieces of veal and of brains, which she carried away, and whilst the said witness was absent a moment

and had passed into the drawing-room, carrying the two dishes, the woman Corday profited by that instant to bury a knife in Marat's bosom ; that then the witness heard confused cries and exclaimed, ' Ah, my God, he is assassinated,' that she at once ran into the ante-chamber, where she found Charlotte Corday struggling with the Citizeness Pain, the wife of the doorkeeper, and the commissionaire who ordinarily carries the papers to the Minister of War, that she leapt upon her, that she seized her by the head and all three together hurled her to the ground, that after having knocked her down, she, the witness, ran up close to her brother [*sic*], whom she found bathed in his blood ; that she put her hand on the wound to stop the blood which was flowing in big spurts ; that during that time neighbours arrived with whose help he was pulled out of the bath ; he was placed on a bed where he had already expired ; that the witness did not leave her brother but that she always recommended that the murderess should not be allowed to escape.

And that is all she said she knew.

This declaration having been read over to the witness, she adhered to it and signed it with us, and our clerk.

EVARD

FOUCAULT."

. . . . .

We know the end of the drama. It had, however, been preceded by an incident which M. Cheron de Villiers, one of the heroine's best biographers, relates in the following terms :—

" It was past midnight. She was made to pass into Marat's bedroom in order to be confronted with the corpse. Catherine [i.e. Simonne] Evrard was sobbing by its side. The gaping wound was laid bare. Mademoiselle

Corday shivered with horror at the sight. 'Yes,' she said, in a voice that was troubled for the first time, 'it was I who killed him.'

At the same time she turned away, and passed into the drawing-room. There, Marino and Louvet claimed her, as being charged with continuing the examination, in their capacity of police administrators. The commissary entered the fact in his official report in these words : 'This being done, we the commissary, on the demand made on us by the citizen police administrators, named above, for the person of the said Marie-Anne-Charlotte Corday, have ordered that she should be handed over to their care, for them to do as may be proper.

'With regard to the objects above mentioned, we have been charged to remit them all to whomsoever shall be ordained.

'GUELLARD.' "

The objects referred to by Guellard were humble : Charlotte's passport, a little money, a gold watch, the key of her trunk, a reel of cotton, a silver thimble, some assignats. At two o'clock in the morning, the commissaries of the Committee of Public Safety decided to remove her from the house of the crime.

"She was made to enter the same carriage which had brought her there," continues M. Cheron de Villiers in his minute narrative. "A furious populace was surging up at the door. As soon as she appeared, she was received with a formidable yelling ; on hearing that dreadful outcry demanding her death, she believed a part of her prayer was about to be accomplished, that she would be torn to pieces by those wretches who were excited to frenzy. She swooned. One of the National Guards escorting her, the lemonade-seller Berger, wanted to take



her back into the house, thinking, he said, that *she desired to be delivered over to the people*. But all movements ceased upon Drouet's voice claiming the law's fulfilment.

Having recovered her senses, she was astonished to be yet alive ; however, she promptly calmed down, and, although she displayed a certain excitement, she did not let drop a single word that could testify to the least disorder in her ideas, not a single phrase that betrayed the shadow of a feeling of regret or repentance. She often repeated : ' I have accomplished my task, others shall do the rest.' "

Yes, her task was accomplished, but the " others " did not accomplish theirs. The Jacobin vengeance was the reply to Marat's death, and three months later the heads of the Girondins atoned for the murder of the People's Friend.

In prison Charlotte addressed two letters to the Committee of Public Safety. The orthography of the originals as they are seen to-day is extremely defective.

*" On the 15th July, 1793, II of the Republic.*

*To the citizens composing the Committee of Public Safety.*

As I have yet a few moments to live, may I hope, citizens, that you will allow me to have my portrait painted? I should like to leave this in memory to my friends. Even as the likenesses of good citizens are cherished curiosity causes sometimes a demand for those of great criminals, which help to perpetuate the horror of their crimes. If you deign to pay attention to my request, I beg you to send me to-morrow a miniature painter. I

renew to you the request of letting me sleep alone.<sup>1</sup>  
Believe, I beg you, in all my gratitude,

MARIE CORDAY.<sup>2</sup>

I hear the news being continually shouted in the street of the arrest of Fauchet,<sup>3</sup> my accomplice. I never saw him except from a window, and that was more than two years ago. I neither like nor esteem him, I always thought he had an excited imagination and no firmness of character ; he is the one man in the world to whom I should have been least willing to confide any project, if this declaration may be of use to him, I certify its truth.

CORDAY."

To her father she wrote :

*" To M. de Corday d'Armont, rue du Bègle.*

*At Argentan.*

Forgive me, my dear papa, for having disposed of my existence without your permission. I have avenged many innocent victims, I have prevented many other disasters ; the people one day disabused will rejoice to be delivered from a tyrant. If I tried to persuade you I was going over to England, it was because I hoped to preserve my incognito, but I have recognised the impossibility of it. I hope you will not be tormented, in any case I think you would have defending barristers at Caen. I have taken Gustave Doukert as my defender.

<sup>1</sup> A gendarme had been put in her cell to watch her by day and night.

<sup>2</sup> The request was granted, and the painter Hauër did her portrait. The canvas can be seen to-day in the Versailles Museum.

<sup>3</sup> Claude Fauchet, Bishop of Calvados, had just been arrested as being suspected of complicity with Charlotte Corday. He was a Member of the National Convention, in which he voted for incarceration at Louis XVI's trial. Involved in the proscription of the Girondins, he appeared with them before the Tribunal and was guillotined 31st October, 1793.

Such a deed does not permit of any defence. It is a matter of form. Good-bye, my dear papa, I pray you to forget me, or rather to rejoice at my fate. The cause of it is fine. I kiss my sister, whom I love with all my heart, as well as my relations. Don't forget Corneille's line :

' Le crime fait la honte et non pas l'échafaud.'<sup>1</sup>

To-morrow at eight I shall be tried ; 16th July.

. . . . .

The citizen Doukert de Pontécoulant is a coward for refusing to defend me when the thing was so easy. He who did so performed his task with all possible dignity. I retain my gratitude to him for it even to the last moment."

On 17th July Charlotte appeared before the Revolutionary Tribunal. The advocate Doukert de Pontécoulant, who had not received the letter in which she begged him to defend her, was replaced by Chauveau-Lagarde.<sup>2</sup> The trial has been several times recounted. It is a mixture of legend and of history. Who indeed does not know it to-day ?

Charlotte Corday, during the whole course of the sitting presided over by Montané, exhibited surprising calm and coolness. She only departed a single moment from that attitude, at the moment when Fouquier-Tinville, emphasising the precision of the knife-blow, added :

" You must have practised the crime a great deal ! "

She seemed to redden as she vehemently protested :

" Oh ! the monster ! He takes me for a murderess ! "

<sup>1</sup> " The crime constitutes the shame and not the scaffold."

<sup>2</sup> It was he who, some months later, defended Marie-Antoinette.





CHARLOTTE CORDAY AT THE CONCIERGERIE



She went to her punishment, clad in the red shirt of parricides. Her head when cut off was knocked about by one of Sanson's helpers, François le Gros. Despite Charlotte Corday's crime, the matter caused a scandal, of which the journals of the period and the memoirs of contemporaries have left us the yet indignant echo.

The autopsy of the body of the decapitated woman took place at the Hospital de la Charité, and she was buried in the Maritime Cemetery.

## VII. A CONTEMPORARY PORTRAIT

HERE is one of the most curious testimonies about Jean Paul Marat, both from the physical and the moral point of view. It emanates from one of his colleagues in the National Convention, Fabre d'Eglantine, the author of "Il pleut, bergère," who was guillotined on 16th Germinal, Year II, with the Dantonists. Fabre d'Eglantine knew Marat intimately, and that is what makes his appreciation valuable amongst all others.

It is one of the best portraits that have come down to us. It has become little known to the general reader, so we republish it here in its entirety, as an explanatory complement of the chapters we have bestowed on the victim of Charlotte Corday.

A tone of impartiality will be noticed, which was quite uncommon at that epoch, and the information it affords, which is almost all verifiable, does not permit us to write down as false that part of it on which investigation has been impossible. It is a forgotten page of biography, which deserves to be removed from the shadow in which it sleeps.



“Aristocrats and demagogues, waverers and patriots, Royalists and Republicans, foreigners and French, men and women, young and old, cold, indifferent, warm, fanatical, all have wanted to talk of Marat, all have talked of him ; everybody has imagined him according to his own taste, everybody has painted him after his own guise, everybody has shown or seen him according to the spirit of his party, and according to the degree of light or blindness, of instinct or reason, of inclination or calculation, which determined the choice of that party.

There has resulted from this complication of traits under which people look for Marat, not a portrait, but a complete disfiguration ; not a drawing, but a blotch ; not Marat, but a multitude of contradictory personages not one of which offers two coherent features of that renowned man, who was truly worthy of being so.

I who have seen Marat close at hand, who knew him well, I who since 14th July, 1789, have watched and studied him attentively and persistently, as I have watched and studied all the men of the French Revolution, of all parties, and in proportion to the means they have offered me of observing them, I am going to try to paint this martyr of freedom, both physically and morally.

Marat, when he died, had lived forty-five or fifty years ; he was of the smallest build ; he was hardly five feet high. Nevertheless he was strongly framed, without being big or fat ; he had broad shoulders and a big stomach, a thin belly, short thighs spread apart, muscular legs, powerful arms, which he moved with vigour and grace ; on a very short neck he carried a head of a very marked character, his face was broad and bony, the nose aquiline, flat and even crushed in, the underneath of the nose prominent and protruding ; the mouth medium

and often folded in one of the corners by a frequent contraction ; the lips thin, the forehead large, the eyes of a grey-yellow hue, intellectual, lively, piercing, serene, naturally gentle, even gracious, and of an assured look ; the eyebrows scanty, the complexion leaden and discoloured ; the face-hair black, the head-hair brown and dishevelled ; he walked with his head high, straight and leaning backward, and with a cadenced quickness, which was undulated by a balancing of the hips ; his most ordinary attitude was energetically folding his arms on his chest.

When speaking in society, he stirred himself with vehemence, and almost always ended with a movement of the foot, which he turned frontwards, and with which he struck the ground, rising suddenly on tiptoe, as if to raise his small stature to the height of his opinion. The sound of his voice was manly, sonorous, a trifle muffled and of a wonderful tone ; a defect of the tongue made it difficult for him to pronounce the ' c's ' and ' l's ' clearly, and he mixed up their pronunciation with the consonant ' g,' without any other perceptible unpleasingness, except that he was rather heavy in speech : but the sentiment of his thought, the fulness of his phrase, the simplicity of his delivery and the brevity of his discourse, absolutely effaced this heaviness of the jaw.

At the tribune, if he went up into it without obstacle and without indignation, he settled down, with assurance and pride, his body effaced, his right hand on his hip, the left arm stretched forward on the desk, his head thrown back, turned three-quarter face, and bent slightly on his right shoulder. If, on the other hand, he had to vanquish at the tribune the yellings of the aristocracy, the chicanery of bad faith and the despotism of

a president, he waited for quiet with firmness and the opportunity for speech with audacity ; he assumed a bold pose, folded his arms diagonally on his chest, and, turning wholly towards the left, lent his countenance and his glance a sardonic character, the whole cynicism of which he did not omit to express in his oration.

He used to dress carelessly ; his indifference on this point proclaimed a complete ignorance of the conventions of fashion and taste, and one may say even an air of dirtiness.

Marat had already before the Revolution made himself a name among the scientists ; the study of physics and the speculative sciences had sharpened his already very lively imagination. To his natural penetration was ever united an imaginative perspicacity, which some one of his passions often led him to abuse ; he had made a deep and continuous study of mankind ; he quickly penetrated the deep motive of their actions, but he flattered himself he alone had divined it. When the rest divined it with him, he sometimes tried to get at a yet deeper motive ; in fine, his illusion often led him astray, and the more so as he expressed his conjectures perfectly well, and explained them by a sound theory of the human heart.

I have said he had studied hard and knew mankind, but his reasoned studies had been conducted on vicious and corrupt subjects. Society hypocrites, charlatans, intolerant philosophers, empirics, immoral savants, climbing *littérateurs*, envious and cowardly rivals, and, in general, men attached, or burning to be attached, to the Court, to the great and the rich—that is to say, perverse and perfidious men, were the subjects on which, at the most vigorous epoch of his age, he exercised that spirit of analysis and observation which gave him as a



result the contempt he felt in general for those who were called at that period *society people*, especially for the enlightened men of that class, when they were not strongly characterised by simplicity both in their reasonings and their eloquence. The greatest patriot—that is to say, a man of that reputation—who, however, was sophistical or fickle, affected or pretentious, becomes suspicious to him from the first moment.

It seems that the first years of his life were spent in the country, or in simple and retired places ; there the goodness of his nature had been developed and strengthened by the sight of nature and of men in the closest connection with her, and by the influence of a condition of simple and peaceful morals. Thence flowed that ardent love of his for the people, that knowledge he had of natural things both morally and physically, that continuous simplicity by which his person, his thought, his speeches and his actions were characterised. In everything his discernment explained matters by the most natural causes ; in everything his genius had recourse to the simplest method ; that is why he appeared almost always extravagant to men subject to prejudice, dominated by habit, carried away by routine, and dupes, or feigning to be so, of our social hypocrisy and the perfidy of the age.

I have said Marat had an ardent love for the people, but he never flattered it ; no one more than he showed a firm attachment to a lively zeal for the national masses, no one has more boldly painted the corruption of our morals. The bitterness of his satire on this subject always equalled his horror of flattery, and in this connection I advance the fact that no being on the globe, before and since our regeneration which has recast our souls into

greatness, beauty and strength, ever heard the slightest phrase of adulation issue from the mouth of Marat : a precious and characteristic sign of true patriotism ! An incontestable mark of the elevation of soul without which no one is a patriot ! For before being a patriot one must be a man ; and a man is distinguished according to the dignity of his being.

In the matter of order and moral sciences, in the matter of belles lettres, Marat had a sure and even delicate taste, not the kind of taste the shades of which vary according to the morals and the times, but the fundamental taste which is no other than the agreement of reason and nature.

This taste, and his simplicity, as well as his patriotism, had made charlatanism and charlatans of all species odious to him, and especially those he saw in the orators' tribune. Accordingly he never omitted to apostrophise them and treat them as *jugglers*, with a bitterness and a cynicism which almost always, whilst filling his friends, and friends of the truth, with pleasure, struck them yet more with astonishment.

Marat had pride, sometimes a mad vanity, and even, if it may be thus expressed, a political fatuity. These faults, from which not a single man on earth is perhaps exempt, these faults which, modified in a hundred thousand different manners, seem inherent in social man, had nevertheless in Marat a praiseworthy source and a generous principle rather than an alluring form. He believed and often said ' that he alone was capable of saving liberty.' . . .

He had something more than affability. One of the bases of his character was the ineffaceable modesty engendered, always engendered and nourished in an

honest soul, by simplicity, love of truth, the sentiment of the beautiful and the good ; therefore nothing made him more indignant than impudence. The sight of effrontery united to dissimulation gave him in speaking and even in attitude a masculine dignity, a grave pride, under which his small stature disappeared and which more than once imposed upon his unbridled antagonists. *I recall you to modesty*, was then his favourite phrase ; and although he had often need to use it, the expression he would put into it was so keenly felt that it never seemed parasitical in his mouth.

I have said that Marat possessed affability : to this quality, which few people were able to distinguish in him, must be attributed a remarkable singularity which is easy to explain. Often when an important and larger question on which he could get a hearing took him to the tribune, you would have seen him, concentrated and full of his subject, start the discussion by a precise and luminous exposition, then treat it with as much order, reason and force as depth, but ever briefly ; his dialectic was close and his conclusion striking in its wisdom.

He astonished his adversaries as much as he embarrassed them ; his triumph was conspicuous in their confusion and in the rapture of the patriots ; he then got excited, his love for justice and for the truth gave him illusions ; he believed the whole assembly penetrated, steeped in it like himself ; he imagined the occasion excellent for procuring triumph for the fatherland ; and lo and behold him suddenly returning to the tribune and presenting confidently his methods of utility and political governance, whose audacity, although rightly calculated, having always an air of exaggeration,



formed so marked a contrast, so violent a disparity with his previous discourse, that almost everyone was taken aback by it, whilst he who almost alone felt the coherence of his ideas and the logical sequence of his reasoning was quite thunderstruck that people who up till then were so wise in listening to him should be so little reasonable in understanding him ten minutes later : a sheer effect of his facility in believing in the empire of the truth, an effect also of his powerlessness to dissimulate. Such scenes several times repeated had taught his opponents, the enemies of the Fatherland, to lay traps for him. More than once they made use of his abounding and imperious frankness to forge weapons for themselves in such a way that, owing to the circumstances they prepared, his veracity might be a crime. Atrocious treachery ! which alone opened to Marat the use of the tribune, which was forbidden to all the Mountain.

That unskilfulness in moderation does not prove Marat's inexperience, which his writings and his insight do not permit one to admit, but it proves his simple-mindedness. But although the imposture of the colours and of the brush which those traitors have used to paint this patriot seems absolutely to exclude such naïveté, it is none the less true that it was one of the distinctive attributes of his character. It derived partly from his keen sensibility and partly from his weakness ; for if all weak men are not sensitive, all sensitive men are weak—more or less, but always weak.

' The scoundrels,' Marat often used to say, ' paint me cruelly, but they are mistaken ! '

Yes, Marat was keenly sensitive. Marat was very weak. Because he was naïf, sensitive and weak, Marat was bound to be credulous, and he was so.

It may easily be imagined that it sufficed for anybody to call himself a lover of his country, and to pretend cleverly to be so, to find access into Marat's mind ; and it sufficed for anybody to bless his patriotism in order to intoxicate him ; but it sufficed for anybody to call himself unhappy in order to melt him and to deceive him ; his death is clear proof of it ! And it will be felt that his weakness and his credulity were consequences of his natural kindliness, and that we must impute the abuse of them only to malicious persons whose peculiarity it is to change the purest springs into poison.

But this Marat, weak through his heart, if we consider him in relation to his mind and his soul we shall perceive to possess a strong head, an invincible courage, an unshakable firmness. I never saw him, even in the most violent storms, without a rare and constant presence of mind. In his designs, in their execution, in his opinions, in his patriotic hate, nothing caused him to deviate, nothing caused him to bend. It was not opinionativeness, for he was able to listen to reason and was able to praise it in others when it surpassed his own, and that with so simple an air that it did honour rather to his own superiority than to his candour.

In danger, in immediate and the most dangerous attacks, in the most violent persecutions, his courage and his fearlessness were worthy of admiration ; no reverse dejected him, no consideration dominated him. The special proofs of it will be found in the manner in which at the Convention he met the terrible and combined attack of the whole aristocracy of France in the person of his foes who were present ; in the overwhelming victory he, by himself alone, achieved over them all by the intrepidity of his bearing and the power of his logic ;

in the terror he inspired in their souls, contempt on his lips, and pistol in his hand.

If we go down a few months later we shall find, in a similar epoch as far as the object is concerned, but different in its circumstances, the proof that in order to conquer Marat it was necessary to reach his heart. When the traitors, the really factious ones, all the stronger and more powerful by the excesses of their zenith, were at their wits' end to get him arrested, when, after the meeting and the dispersion of the deputies, Marat found himself almost alone in the hall, surrounded by a few distressed patriots, I saw in my grief at the same time his affliction, his courage and his presence of mind ; he refused to deliver his life to poison or to assassins, he was firm though he was sad and pained, but you could read on his face the poignant chagrin of a worshipper of liberty who sees the enemies of the country triumphing, who sees the patriots together with their cause succumbing beneath the redoubled efforts of perfidy and of villainy.

When, after his judgment, he returned in triumph to the Convention, carried on high and crowned by the people, if anything caused the traitors more spiteful hatred and fury than the triumph itself, it was Marat's moderation and dignity ; and there it was easy to judge of the kindliness of his mind and how his reason and his knowledge were superior to his passions.

The swiftness of the events of the Revolution which it was necessary to watch, the large number of conspiracies it was needful to defeat, the necessary prosecutions which did not leave the patriots breathing time, did not allow Marat to leave us proof that he had conceived, or that he was strong enough to conceive, a completed system of Republic, combined in all its parts. But it is never-



theless easy, although these writings, produced at different periods, show notable differences among themselves as to principles and results. In proportion as the Revolution progressed, in proportion as the Republic was established, Marat from day to day developed in his pamphlets and his speeches combinations by which the system he desired for France worked itself out in his brains.

Those who ponder what remains to us of this patriot would observe that he abhorred the *aristocracy* more than the *monarchy*, and the *ochlocracy* still more than those two first species of government ; but they will also observe, in almost every line of his discourses, that if democracy was the goal of his desires and of his labours he wanted it broadly combined and strongly governed.

. . . . .

In general, Marat had no petty ideas ; who has not seen him smile with pity and shrug his shoulders every time that a project of great and fundamental law fell for discussion into the hands of pedants and formalists, who, gnawing as they pleased around the project, ended by disfiguring it and reducing it to nonsense ? ' When I see a work of the intellect placed at the discretion of the jurists,' he used to say, ' it seems to me that, by dint of correcting it they take away its character, by dint of perfecting it they make a platitude of it.' It was the proper comparison, and his own phrase.

An essential trait in every man's portrait would be wanting if his narrownesses were not mentioned. Marat had his, and they were even very amusing in a man the liveliness of whose movements, the impetuosity of whose character and trenchant truthfulness could not admit of any kind of dissimulation. Marat had a pretension to

Machiavellism : this man whose look alone gave a practised eye the clearest idea of the situation, this man whose least act of zeal, although true, took on the colour of an act of business, this man wanted people to believe he was a great theoriser in the art of ruling by ruse and caution : he was so imbued with this mania that at small intimate gatherings, after having stormed against the enemies of liberty, after having exhaled all his hatred, and detailed everything in the way of methods which his character suggested to him when the trickery of the aristocrats and their black underhandedness came under discussion, he presently began smiling, and with a perfectly superior air bade us be tranquil ; and, tapping his forehead, claimed that it was filled with more subtle devices than could be contained in the combined cabinets of Vienna, Petersburg, and London ; it was very assuredly not strange, but quite a common eccentricity of human beings to wish precisely to know best the thing they know least ! Whenever Marat perceived the slightest disbelief of his confidence in his Machiavellism he grew offended and said that we should see.

Marat had few friends ; he spared their feelings little, and offended them sometimes ; but he readily, promptly and of his own accord came back to them with a frank, simple, genuine but little-demonstrative repentance. He was unable to keep any rancour except against the aristocrats, he would forgive people even when they masked themselves, with the certainty of hating them more than ever next day in proportion as he had little calculated the probabilities of their conversion.

Marat, to sum up, had genius, intellect, learning, and taste, great virtues, some faults, but no vices.

He was an excellent patriot, an intrepid Revolutionary. If any harm came through him, the blame lies with his enemies and traitors ; no one desired more than he the salvation of the country ; few have rendered it greater services ; the patriots were baptised with his name in spite of themselves ; if the idea remains with his memory, many rascals will perhaps be called by that celebrated name in spite of him. Marat has deserved well of the country, and posterity will religiously remember him wherever the love of freedom is a passion."

### VIII. MARAT, PAINTED BY HIMSELF

AFTER Fabre d'Eglantine's sketch it is not uninteresting to quote the portrait drawn by Marat of himself. It will be noticed that the writer hardly dissembles at all, and that it is with a rough frankness, almost brutal, that he unveils himself to the people. It was on 14th January, 1793, in No. 98 of his *Journal de la République Française*, that Marat published this chief page of his biography, because, as Vermorel remarks in his edition of the *Œuvres de Marat*, "this autobiography, besides the interest it affords, is the more precious in that there is an absolute lack of documents about his youth." To tell the truth, the documents avowed and handed down by Marat are not numerous, but they have at least the merit of an interest which has never been denied them.

"I ask pardon of my readers if I talk to them to-day about myself ; it is neither self-love nor foolishness, but a simple desire to serve the public weal better. How should I represent to myself as a crime the revealing of myself as I am, when the enemies of liberty do not



cease blackening me, showing me as a hothead, a dreamer, a madman, or as a man-eater, a tiger thirsting for blood, a monster breathing forth nothing but carnage, and that in order to inspire fright at the hearing of my name, and to hinder the good which I would like to be able to do.

Born with a sensitive soul, an imagination of fire, a boiling character, a character fervent, outspoken, tenacious, an upright mind, a heart open to all exalted passions, and especially to the love of glory, I have never done anything to alter or destroy those gifts of nature and I have done everything to cultivate them.

Owing to an uncommon stroke of luck I had the advantage of receiving a very careful education at home, of escaping all the vicious habits of childhood, which enervate and degrade man, of avoiding all the deviations of youth and arriving at manhood without ever having abandoned myself to the impulse of the passions ; I was verging on twenty-one years of age, and had already for a long time been devoted to the meditation of the study.

The sole passion that devoured my soul was the love of glory, but it was as yet only a fire glowing beneath the embers.

The stamp of my soul comes from nature, but I owe the development of my character to my mother, for my father never aspired to make anything of me except a scientist.

That woman most worthy of respect, whose loss I still deplore, trained me in my first years ; she alone caused philanthropy, the love of justice and of fame to blossom out in my heart : precious sentiments ! They soon became the sole passions which thenceforward settled the destinies of my life. It was through my hands that she passed on the help she gave to the poor, and the tone of

interest she put into speaking with them inspired me with that with which she was animated.

The love of men is the basis of the love of justice ; because the idea of the just is developed no less by feeling than by reason. My moral sense was already developed at eight years of age : at that age I could not endure the sight of the ill-treatment of other people ; the sight of cruelty carried me away with indignation, and the spectacle of an injustice always made my heart jump like the feeling of a personal outrage.

During my earliest years my physique was very weakly, so that I knew neither the petulance nor the excitement nor the games of childhood. Being docile and hard-working, the masters obtained everything from me by gentleness. I was never chastised but once, and resentment for an unjust humiliation made so strong an impression on me that it was impossible to bring me back under the ferule of my tutor ; I remained two whole days without wanting to take my food. I was then seven years of age ; my firmness of character at that age will be gauged by this trait alone. My parents, having proved unable to make me give way, and the paternal authority believing itself compromised, I was shut up in my room ; being unable to resist the indignation that was suffocating me, I opened the window and threw myself into the street. Luckily the window was not high up ; but in spite of it I hurt myself violently in my fall ; I still have the scar on my forehead.

Feather-brained men who blame me for being a ' hot-head ' will see by this that I was one early in life ; but what they will perhaps refuse to believe is that from my earliest years I was eaten up with the love of glory, a passion that often has changed its object in the various

periods of my life, but which has never left me one moment. At five I should have liked to be the master of a school ; at fifteen a professor ; an author at eighteen, a creative genius at twenty, even as my ambition to-day is the glory of sacrificing myself for the fatherland.

That is what Nature and the lessons of my childhood made me ; circumstances and reflection have done the rest.

I had reflected at fifteen, was an observer at eighteen, a thinker at twenty-one. From the age of ten years I contracted the habit of a studious life ; intellectual work became for me a real need, even in my illnesses ; and I have found my sweetest pleasures in meditation, in those peaceful moments when the soul contemplates with admiration the magnificence of the spectacle of Nature, or, when retiring into itself, it seems to listen to itself in silence, to weigh in the scales of happiness the vanity of human grandeurs, to pierce the dark future, to seek man beyond the tomb and to carry a restless curiosity into his eternal destinies.

Apart from the small number of years I devoted to the practice of medicine, I have spent twenty-five in retirement, in reading the best scientific and literary works, in the study of Nature, in deep researches and in meditation. I believe I have almost exhausted all the combinations of the human mind about morals, philosophy, and politics, in order to get the best results out of them. I have written eight volumes about metaphysical, anatomical and physiological investigations of man. I have written twenty about discoveries in the different branches of physics ; several were published a long time ago, the others are in my MSS. boxes.

I have carried into my study the sincere desire to be



useful to mankind, a holy respect for the truth, appreciation of the limits of human wisdom, and my dominating passion, the love of fame ; it is that alone which decided the choice of subjects with which I have dealt, and which has constantly caused me to reject all in which I could not promise myself to reach the truth, great results, and so be original. For I cannot make up my mind to handle over again a question already treated, nor to rehash the works of others.

I might venture to flatter myself for not having missed my aim, to judge by the unworthy persecution which the Royal Academy of Sciences did not cease plaguing me with for ten years, when it was assured that my discoveries concerning light overthrew its labours for a century and that I was very little anxious to enter its bosom. As the Dalemberets, the Caritats,<sup>1</sup> the Menniers, the Lalandes, the Laplaces, the Monges, the Cousins, the Lavoisiers, and the charlatans of that scientific body wanted to be alone in the limelight, and as they held in their hands the clarions of renown, will it be believed that they had stooped to depreciate my discoveries throughout Europe, to incite against me all the scientific societies and to close to me all the journals, even to the extent of making me unable to get the title of my works announced in them, of forcing me to take a pseudonym in order to obtain approval for some of my productions ?

For five years I had been groaning under this cowardly oppression, when the Revolution was announced by a convention of the States-General. I quickly saw where things would go, and I began to breathe in the hope of seeing humanity at length avenged, of helping to break its fetters and of putting myself in my proper place.

<sup>1</sup> That is to say, the Marquis Caritat de Condorcet.

That was as yet only a beautiful dream. It was all but vanishing ; a cruel illness threatened to finish me up in the grave. Not wishing to quit life without having done something for liberty, I composed the *Offrande à la patrie* on a bed of pain. The little work had much success, it was crowned by the Société Patriotique du Caveau, and the pleasure I experienced at it was the principal cause of my recovery.

When restored to life, I only busied myself with the means of serving the cause of freedom."

## IX. SIMONNE EVRARD, WIDOW MARAT

At the hour when Marat dies, Simonne Evrard is seen to make her public appearance. As a matter of fact, from 1790, the year in which she connects herself with him, to 1793, the year in which death separates him from her, she is seen to figure only at a distance, effaced, unknown, and, as it were, ignored in the life of the People's Friend. Nevertheless she was there, active and loyal in his shadow, eager and devoted, smitten by one knows not what fervent love of devotion for that stormy and desperate soul.

Whence did she come ? What were her antecedents ? Some civil documents, bald and but little garrulous, throw here and there some accurate light upon that effaced life, lived in a kind of oblivion and darkness.

She is known to have been a native of the Saône-et-Loire Department of Tournus, where she was born in 1764, of parents in poor circumstances, it seems. Her father was a ship's carpenter. He died in hospital in February, 1776, nobody knows of what. Simonne arrived in Paris about this time, with her two sisters, Etiennette

and Catherine. She was at first a workwoman in a laundry, and afterwards entered a manufactory of watch-hands.<sup>1</sup>

What did she look like physically at that time? "A certain legend has deliberately represented her as a slattern, but she was lacking neither in decency nor in dignity," writes M. Léon Douarche in his "*Curiosités révolutionnaires*." That is but a vague bit of information. A police record is more precise: "Height 1 m. 62, hair and eyebrows brown, forehead ordinary, chin round, nose aquiline, face oval." Another document states: "Grey eyes and medium mouth," disagreeing in that respect with the first which lays down the precise description: "Brown eyes and large mouth." How then can you trust police records? Those relating to Simonne Evrard are diversely contradictory, and neither M. Alfred Bougeart, the author of "*Marat, l'Ami du Peuple*," nor Dr. Cabanès, in his "*Marat Inconnu*," has concerned himself to unravel the difficulties.

As a matter of fact, should not this little physiological problem rather be transported to the moral sphere, and there be studied? Marat, at the period when he knows Simonne Evrard, is forty-six. She had passed twenty-six summers.

"The age of the personages," writes M. Alfred Bougeart, "the avowed aim of the union singularly enhanced its character; my memories of history do not furnish me with an example otherwise. Twenty-six years is the age when a woman, disabused with the coqueries of youth, attaches herself especially to a man for his moral virility; when she no longer loves except on the condition of

<sup>1</sup> This information is furnished in an interesting article by M. Roger Gil-Baër, in the *Revue*, 1st March, 1907, pp. 79 *sqq.*



esteeming, admiring, I would almost say deifying. Forty-six is the age when the man no longer seeks in the woman anything but another self to whom to confide all his thought, all his hopes ; that she should understand, that she should feel, that she should encourage is all she can give, but it is also all the man wants. Now, as a compensation for all his miseries, for all his disappointments, as a providential reward for all his sacrifices, Marat had this too rare happiness of meeting a being who felt as keenly as himself, who was to him another self. Now, who can be certain that if alone he would not have been discouraged, would not have been carried away by the rapidity of the current ? Is not a reed, however weak it may be, enough to save a drowning man ?

That is why we do not fear to state that history in forgetting Simonne has been ungrateful ; but this deliberate forgetfulness has only been the consequence of a first injustice, of the denial of Marat's unselfish devotion to the cause of freedom. If history to her had been merely forgetful it would be a small matter, but it has calumniated her and gratuitously covered her with the mud of the prostitutes."

The reasons thus propounded by M. Bougeart are by no means specious, and are in accordance with the most elementary psychology. In addition, in order to make Simonne Evrard comprehensible, he appeals to several decisive contemporary testimonies. Here are the terms in which, in a public discourse during the inauguration of Marat's bust (Brumaire, Year II), Alexandre Rousselin speaks of the circumstances of the union between the People's Friend and Simonne :

" It was in a cavern that gratitude gave birth to the virtuous love to which Marat was faithful. His generous

lover, when saving him, had declared herself the lover of her country ; she deserved to be his inseparable companion ; we should have to penetrate into the secret of so sweet an intimacy in order to be convinced that Marat's lofty, proud soul was accessible to all the charms of the honourable affections. A soul so beautiful could only experience sublime passions ; nothing impure or degraded soiled its chaste enthusiasm. By giving himself as a reward he has consecrated for our veneration the tenderest object of the noblest sentiments."

The brother of Lepelletier exclaimed on the occasion of a similar festival :

" I should call for your vengeance, citizens, on the entire sex of women if, beside the memory of the misdeeds of one of them (Charlotte Corday), you did not recall a Republican woman who saved Marat from the persecutions of the despot during three years, who consecrated to him her life, her fortune, her existence, and who by her virtues well deserved to become his cherished companion."

In order to get at the true meaning of certain of these testimonies we must return to the beginnings of the relations between the People's Friend and Simonne Evrard. Those relations were cemented at the period of Marat's proscription. Being compelled to hide, as we have already related, he had, according to one of his biographers, M. Chèvremont, found an asylum with the sisters Evrard in the Rue Saint-Honoré. From fear of compromising them Marat had exchanged this refuge for that offered him by Jacques Roux, the same who in the name of the Paris Commune was destined on 21st January, 1793, to confirm the execution of Louis XVI. These happenings momentarily prevented the publica-

tion of the *Ami du Peuple*, Marat's newspaper. The proscribed man had lost all his property amid the troubles of his life. Simonne Evrard opened her purse to him and thus permitted the appearance of the terrible paper. That is the explanation of the passage in Alexandre Rousselin's speech quoted above. That is also the explanation of how the intimacy of Marat and Simonne Evrard survived the evil days in which it had begun.

This is the moment to appeal to the testimony of Chèvremont. The information he has collected throws a definite light, one may well believe, on the figure of Marat's mistress. His testimony sums up all previous testimonies, completes them in the points that remained obscure and may serve as a conclusion to this biography.

"Here are the facts," says Chèvremont. "Marat, who had secretly returned to France and was hiding at 243 Rue Saint-Honoré with the three sisters Evrard, addressed letters to Robespierre and to Chabot in which he begged them to persuade the patriotic Societies to help in the resumption of *L'Ami du Peuple*, according to the decision of the Cordeliers Club. Marat, fearing to abuse the hospitality he was receiving from the Evrard family, took refuge with Jacques Roux. Days, then weeks, pass, and the journal *L'Ami du Peuple* does not appear, in spite of the good-will of the patriotic Societies. Simonne understood: a supreme devotion was wanting in the individual devotion in order to restore the defender of the people to his august functions; and, 'Well,' she said to herself, 'I shall share his privations, his sufferings, his dangers, the contempt with which he is covered by his enemies and perhaps I shall help him to endure them.' Simonne calls back the unfortunate proscribed man, offers him a fixed asylum, obliges him to accept her



modest fortune and, sacrificing every prejudice to her country, consecrates her peace, her reputation, her very life to the Friend, to the defender of the people."

So, Marat being welcomed by her, Simonne Evrard lived at this new home and created about the People's Friend the soothing atmosphere which certainly prolonged his days to July, 1793. He, moreover, had cherished a feeling of tender gratitude and affection for this young woman, who was so obstinately and obscurely devoted to him.

On 1st January, 1792, Marat put his signature to the promise of marriage which was found later among his papers after his death.

"Mademoiselle Simonne Evrard's beautiful qualities having captivated my heart, whose homage she has received, I leave her as a pledge of my faith during my forthcoming voyage to London the sacred engagement to give her my hand at once after my return ; if all my tenderness does not suffice her as a warrant of my fidelity may the forgetting of this engagement cover me with infamy !

JEAN PAUL MARAT,  
*The Friend of the People.*"

"One understands the reason of the promise," says M. Alfred Bougeart. "The People's Friend felt his health weakening every day ; he was, besides, at every instant exposed to the steel of an assassin, so that, in case of accident, he wanted to leave behind a testimony to the affection and respect he felt for his deliverer ; he wanted to confound his past and his future calumniators ; he hoped thus to safeguard his widow's position, the sale of his works being enough of itself to assure her an

independence ; was not that a contract as legal as a testamentary will, an engagement as sacred as any that can be imagined ? Do you not recognise the exquisite delicacy of the signatory who, without doubt, had given his friend no hint of it, because he well knew she would have refused to take his promise ? ”

This, however, is not enough for the prudes who only recognise municipal legality and in whose eyes there is lacking the solemn and public consecration of witnesses to make the union lawful. Well, then, here is the declaration of the brother and sisters of Marat as it was inserted in the *Journal de la Montagne*, on 26th August, 1793 :

“ Although already convinced of the important services rendered by the Citizeness Evrard to the Citizen Marat, her husband, we have believed it necessary, in order to give this document all the authenticity required by our gratitude, to call to witness the persons who have known the situation to which our brother was reduced by the sacrifices he had made to help the Revolution.

Penetrated with admiration and gratitude towards our dear and worthy sister, we declare that her husband's family owes the preservation of the last years of his life to her ; that without her he would have succumbed to neglect and misery. Since the family of Marat was then ignorant of the condition of that unfortunate victim, since she not only devoted her fortune and her care to his preservation, heroically shared his perils and rescued him for a long time by her vigilance from the traps laid for him by the aristocracy and from the disgrace with which it tried to cover him, but also restored that indefatigable citizen to the dignity of his functions ; we accordingly

declare it to be with satisfaction that we are fulfilling our brother's wishes in recognising the Citizeness Evrard as our sister, and that we shall consider infamous any of his family, should there be any, who do not share the feelings of respect and gratitude which we owe her; and if, contrary to our expectation, there might possibly be any such, we ask that their name be made known so that we may not share their infamy.

Done in Paris, this 22nd August, the Year II of the French Republic.

MARIE-ANNE-MARAT, *femme* OLIVIER.

ALBERTINE MARAT.

JEAN-PIERRE MARAT."

This too is how Albertine Marat expresses herself on the subject of Simonne, in her "Réponse aux détracteurs de l'Ami du Peuple":

"People, your good genius allowed that a divine woman, whose soul resembled Marat's, should consecrate her fortune and her repose in order to preserve your friend to you. Heroic woman; receive the homage which your virtues deserve; yes, we owe it to you. Inflamed by the divine fire of liberty, you wanted to preserve your most ardent defender; you shared his lot and his tribulations; nothing could abate your zeal; you sacrificed to the People's Friend both the fear of your family and the prejudices of the century. Being compelled here to keep within limits, I shall await the instant at which your virtues will appear in all their brilliancy."

Finally Chèvremont winds up the passage in his book in these terms:

"These lawful, undeniable titles were respected by the National Convention, by the Reactionaries of 1795 them-



selves, and they are consecrated even in the Etat-Civil of the city of Paris. We have therefore good grounds for saying: Simonne Evrard is in every respect the worthy, the legitimate spouse of Marat."<sup>1</sup>

As a matter of fact, it was only at Marat's death that the engagement was discovered. It was now too late, the People's Friend was no more. His widow alone remained to receive the homage rendered to his memory. Was she not like the Virgin in the Scriptures, overwhelmed with sorrow, now when they were celebrating Marat's "sacred heart" and "divine blood"? The cult of the murdered man had indeed just been started; they deified him whom Camille Desmoulins had called the "divine" and to whom the Marquis de Sade consecrated the panegyric of a quatrain:

"Du vrai républicain, unique et chère idole,  
De ta perte, Marat, ton image console,  
Qui chérit un grand homme adopte ses vertus;  
Les cendres de Scévole ont fait naître Brutus."

Her mourning was softened by such homage, by those songs, those speeches, those eulogies. She jealously guarded her prerogatives, standing up in her ardent

<sup>1</sup> Chèvremont adds to these details in a note: "We beg to inform amateurs of autographs that in the cabinet of one of them there is a *forged letter* addressed to Camille Desmoulins, under the date of 25th September, 1793, and the signature of *Veuve Marat*. This letter begins as follows: 'Permit me, Citizen, without knowing you, to claim your kindness on my own behalf. . . .' And it ends with this phrase: 'Do not abandon me; it is pleasant for a Republican heart to protect oppressed innocence.'

Without entering into an examination of the contents of this *forged letter*, which a moderate knowledge of the biography of the Widow Marat suffices to prove an *arch-forgery*, we denounce it to the public as the work of an unworthy speculator." (F. Chèvremont, "Jean Paul Marat, esprit politique accompagné de sa vie scientifique, politique et privée," Paris, 1880, 8vo, Vol. II, p. 19 *seq.*)

weakness to defend her dead lover against his enemies' blasphemies. For instance, at the meeting of the Convention on 8th August, 1793, she came and energetically protested against the fraudulent persons who gave certain public sheets the title of the *Ami du Peuple*.

"Citizens," she said, "you see before you the widow of Marat. I do not come to ask you for the favours which greed covets or poverty demands: Marat's widow only needs a grave. Before arriving at that happy end of my life, I am come to ask justice of you for some new attempts made against the memory of the most fearless and the most outraged of the people's defenders."

A year later she was destined to assist at a striking revenge of the insulted shade on his detractors. On the last day of the Year II (21st September, 1794) the corpse of Jean Paul Marat was solemnly carried up to the French Panthéon, whilst that of Mirabeau was ejected. It was the last apotheosis of the People's Friend.

The end of his cult<sup>1</sup> had arrived. A few weeks more and he was fated to be burnt in effigy, his bust was broken

<sup>1</sup> About this cult Lamartine speaks as follows:

"The pilgrimages of the people to Marat's grave were organised every Sunday, and confounded in a like adoration the heart of this apostle of murder with the heart of the Christ of Peace. The theatres were all adorned with his image. Squares and streets changed their names and assumed his. Some journalists named their sheets *L'Ombre de Marat*. The madness spread through all the Departments. His name became the ensign of patriotism. The mayor of Nîmes had himself called the Marat of the South; he of Strasbourg, the Marat of the Rhine. The Conventional Carrier called his troops the army of Marat. The widow of the *Ami du Peuple* came and asked the Convention for vengeance for her husband and a tomb for herself. Funeral fêtes, processions, anniversaries, were instituted in a large number of communes of the republic. Young women, dressed in white and holding in their hands garlands of cypress and oak, used to sing hymns to Marat around the catafalque. All the burdens of those hymns were bloodthirsty. Charlotte Corday's poniard, instead of stanching the blood of France, seemed to have opened its veins."

to pieces in the theatres and curses were levelled at the memory of a man whom one poor, wretched female was henceforth to be the only one to bewail.

From that time, his widow vanishes from history and almost from the memoirs. What is known of her, beginning from that day, is certainly very trifling. Her life remains obscure and secret. She was going to end her days in the company of the sister of the murdered man, Albertine Marat. At the time of her brother's murder Albertine was in Switzerland. As soon as the news of the crime reached her she rushed off to Paris and took part with Simonne Evrard in the last honours rendered to the Friend of the People. When the period of reaction had come the two women went and lived together in a mean apartment in the Rue Saint-Jacques.

Under some unknown pretext the police came and arrested them there in the month of Prairial, Year III. They dragged along four months from prison to prison, from Sainte-Pélagie to the Madelonnettes, ignorant of the offence with which they were charged. One fine day in the month of Vendémiaire, Year IV, they were set free, still without having learnt the charge against them. They plunged again into obscurity, and nothing more was heard about them for several years. It was only in the year IX, apropos of the attempt on the First Consul in the Rue Saint-Nicolas, that the police were led to busy themselves about the widow of the Apostle of the Terror. In fact, the attempt was supposed to have been planned by certain impenitent Jacobins, and could such Jacobins frequent any other house than that of Marat's widow? The police was simple enough and silly enough to suppose it. They arrested Simonne and Albertine, and the former under-



went an interrogatory at the Prefecture of Police which it is important to reproduce, for it initiates us into the private life of this sad wreck of the Revolutionary storm. Here is the document whose revelation is due to M. Paul Fassy, in his work on the Princesse de Lamballe, where it is given in the appendices :

*“ Question :* What are your name, Christian name, age, place of birth and domicile ?

*Answer :* My name is Simonne Evrard, widow of Jean Paul Marat, aged thirty-six, born at Tournus, Department of Saone-et-Loire, living in the Rue Saint-Jacques, No. 674, Division des Thermes, with my sister.

*Q.* Why are you arrested ?

*A.* I don't know.

*Q.* Where were you during the day of the 3rd Nivôse ?

*A.* I remained at home all day.

*Q.* Whom did you receive in your house ?

*A.* Nobody.

*Q.* Still, there was company in your house at night, several persons were seen round a table lighted by three lights.

*A.* That day I washed the whole day and only finished at nine at night. My sister had only her lamp ; she works in the clock-making line. I only went out to fetch a litre of wine and I supped alone with my sister. I don't receive three persons in a decade.

*Q.* Who are the persons you have seen within a month ?

*A.* We only see the Citizen Ramu, a clock-maker, who lives in the Rue de la Barillerie, and gets work for my sister. There came a citizen from our part of the country, whose name I don't remember.

*Q.* What are the names of your neighbours ?

A. The Citizen Digard, a proprietor butcher. The rest of the house is occupied by women.

Q. Whom have you heard speak about the event of the 3rd? And when?

A. The butcher's wife told me the next day that a house had been blown up in order to crush Bonaparte.

Q. By refusing to name the persons you frequent you will make us believe you see enemies of the Government.

A. I have told you the exact truth. I don't receive anybody, because I am in great distress, having only five hundred and sixty francs from the State as my whole income."

There can be no question, after reading this document, about the wretched poverty of the mistress of the Convention. It is one of the last evidences remaining about the end of her life. There is, however, another, less valuable maybe, but certainly quite as curious. It emanates from Simonne's physician, Dr. P.-L. Poumies de la Siboutie, who writes in his recently published souvenirs:

"About 1820 I often attended a woman who had called me in. She was known in the house where she lodged as the widow of Marat, whose concubine she merely was, whatever she may have said. She confided to me that during the Restoration she was the victim of such ill-treatment that she had the intention of going and settling in another distant quarter and changing her name. She was very ugly, and could never have been pretty. She told me that during the six<sup>1</sup> years of her marriage she had never had to complain of Marat, who at home was gentleness and goodness itself; but that his ideas, his fanaticism were so exaggerated that he would

<sup>1</sup> We may recall here that Simonne Evrard lived with Marat, not six years, but from 1790 to 1793.

not have hesitated to sacrifice one of his limbs, his very life, to make his opinion triumph. My information about the woman ends there."

It is all, in truth, that it is possible to gather about her. In the misery of her effacement her unhappy existence terminated in 1824. She was then living at No. 33 in the Rue de la Barillerie. That year Simonne had a fall on the staircase of the gloomy house. The accident killed her. She was interred somewhere, nobody knows where. Thus disappeared the mistress of Marat, the widow of the Friend of the People.

Albertine alone remained.

She had been confined in the narrow apartment in the Rue de la Barillerie, gaining her poor, mean little livelihood by clock-making work. Some people, however, had not forgotten her. About 1830 a group of persons interested in the Revolution, admirers of the Jacobin *épopée*, gathered together in her house. They were Raspail, the historian of the Mountaineers, Alphonse Esquiros, the collector Maurin, whose Revolution *trouvailles* were famous, and others too who listened attentively to the stories coming from her mouth. It is Esquiros who relates in a striking passage that does not deserve oblivion what the sister of Marat said, with what courageous pride she bore his name. In about 1832 he visited Albertine Marat, who, he writes, had refused to marry so as not to lose a name in whose glory she exulted. As for the rest here is Esquiros's tale :

" Rue de la Barillerie, No. 32 (the address was given me by the great statuary, David), I came across a narrow and gloomy lane. On the wall I read the words :

' THE DOORKEEPER IS ON THE SECOND FLOOR.'



I went up. On the second floor I asked for Mademoiselle Marat. The doorkeeper and his wife exchanged looks in silence.

‘It’s here?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Is she in?’

‘Always; the poor woman is paralysed in the legs.’

‘On what floor?’

‘The fifth, the door on the right.’

I continued the ascent. The staircase became rougher and rougher. The unwhitewashed walls exposed to the bright daylight the dirty nakedness of the plaster. Having arrived right up at the top, before an ill-shut door, I knocked. After a few moments’ waiting, during which I gave a last glance at the dilapidation of the place, the door was opened. I was thunderstruck. The creature who had just opened to me and was looking at me was Marat. I had been warned about this almost supernatural likeness between the brother and sister, but I did not believe it possible to that degree. Her dubious garb lent still more colour to the illusion. She was coiffed with a white napkin which allowed very little hair to come through. The napkin reminded me that Marat had his head so covered when he was killed in his bath.

I put the usual question:

‘Mademoiselle Marat?’

She fixed two dark and piercing eyes on me.

‘This way. Come in.’

She introduced me into a sombre cabinet, where a kind of bed could be seen confusedly in a corner. The cabinet gave into a one-windowed room, quite clean but wretchedly furnished. The sole furniture consisted

of three chairs, a table, a cage in which two canaries were singing, and an open cupboard containing some books. One of the window-panes having been broken it had been replaced by an oily strip of paper which cast a dim and dreary light into the room on the rainy day that it was. On seeing all this poverty I could not help thinking of the unselfishness of those Revolutionary kings who had held in their hands everyone's fortunes, together with everyone's head, and had died leaving their widow and their sister on the fifth floor in a garret, without linen and perhaps without a fire in winter.

Marat's sister sat down in an arm-chair and invited me to sit beside her. I told her my name. When she was informed of the object of my visit, I hazarded some questions about her brother. She spoke to me, I confess, more about the Revolution than about Marat. I was quite surprised to find under the exterior of a woman of the people a quite correct, precise and vehement vocabulary. I recognised in it all the ideas and often even the expressions of her brother. Likewise she made a special effect on me in the taciturn light which prevailed in the room. The terror attaching to the persons and the things of 1793 gradually penetrated me. I was cold. The woman seemed less the sister of Marat than his shade.

I listened to her in silence.

The words that fell from her lips were in truth stiff phrases :

'One does not found,' she told me, 'a republic with gold or with ambitions, but with virtues. The people must be moralised. A republic requires pure men whom the attraction of wealth and the seductions of women find inflexible. There is no other glory on earth but to work for the maintenance of duty and law. Cicero is only

great because he defeated the schemes of Caligula<sup>1</sup> and defended the liberty of Rome. My brother himself is only of some importance to me because he worked all his life to destroy factions and establish the good of the people ; otherwise I should reject him. Monsieur, keep this well in mind : it is not the liberty of the party one must aim at, it is the liberty of all, and that liberty is only won by austere morals. One must be able in case of need to sacrifice one's own life and that of one's fellow-citizens in order to uphold the general good. My brother died in harness. Whatever may be done, his memory will not be blotted out.'

She then spoke to me of Robespierre with bitterness.

'There was nothing in common,' she added, 'between him and Marat. If my brother had lived, the heads of Danton and Camille Desmoulins would not have fallen.'

I asked if her brother had been really doctor of the bodyguard of the Comte d'Artois.

'Yes,' she told me, 'it is the truth. Consequently later on he was pursued by a crowd of marchionesses and countesses, who came to try and get him to desert the cause of the people. The rumour even ran at that time through the city that he had sold himself for a castle. Monsieur,' she added, showing me with pride her wretched hovel, 'look, I am his sister and his sole heir ; this is my castle.'

I caught her several times looking at me distrustfully and inquisitively. The suspicious temper of the Revolutionaries of 1793 had not slumbered in her with the years. She even avowed to me that she wanted to have some information about my citizenship. I also saw her grow angry at some reflections I made : she was certainly

<sup>1</sup> *Sic.* Clearly Catilina must be meant.—*Translator's Note.*



of the blood of Marat. The principles her brother had defended seemed to her alone worthy of interest ; the details of her intimate life were, according to her, bound up with the conditions of man, a transitory being liable to calamities, whom death effaces under a little earth. However, I got from her by dint of persistence some information about Marat's life and habits. She spoke to me of Charlotte Corday as of an adventuress and a loose woman.

I got up to go.

' Monsieur,' she said to me, ' come back in a fortnight. I will give you further details if I am not dead, for in the state of illness and old age in which you see me, I shall be extinguished suddenly ; one day, perhaps to-morrow, on opening the door, they will find me dead. Death is only an evil for those whose consciences are troubled. I who am on the edge of the ditch and am speaking to you, I know that one quits life without regret when one feels oneself pure. My brother died poor and a victim of his devotion to the country ; that is his whole glory.'

I went out with a weight on my heart——"<sup>1</sup>

. . . . .

Albertine Marat only died 3rd November, 1841. Next day the *Siècle* published her funeral oration in ten lines :

" The sister of the famous Marat has just died, at the age of eighty-three, in a garret in the Rue de la Barillerie, amid the profoundest misery, and only having near her on her death-bed a grocer, her sole heir, and the wife of a doorkeeper, the sole friend remaining to her. This lady, whose features, strongly marked, recalled her brother's

<sup>1</sup> This account is quoted from Alphonse Esquiros's novel " Charlotte Corday," which appeared in 1841. See p. 31 *et seq.*

face, lived a long time on the product of the making of watch-hands, a handicraft in which it is said she excelled ; she knew Latin. When age came, with its infirmities, she had fallen into naked distress. Four neighbours and friends escorted the mortal remains to the common trench."

## FORGOTTEN FIGURES

### I. THE MAN WHO GUILLOTINED STATUES

I POSSESS a rather faded portrait of him, in which he is scornfully curling thin, clean-shaven lips from the height of an ample cravat. The forehead is broad, powerful, and obstinate, suggesting the character of the lawyer, rigid and inflexible. On the whiteness of the knotted muslin rests a lean, square, arbitrary chin. The eye is vivid, piercing, sharp-glancing.

This is Antoine-Louis Albitte, senior.

Before the Revolution storm he would be seen going along the streets of Dieppe, thin and upright, enveloped in a lawyer's black suit, holding his head high, as he always did, even on the benches of the Legislative Assembly, to which he had been sent in September, 1791, by the Department of the Seine-Inférieure.

His name is almost unknown to-day ; that face whose somewhat calculated coldness rather resembles Robespierre's (the Arras lawyer) is wellnigh forgotten, and it is only the accident of an angular, bold signature at the foot of a decree that still preserves his memory. Nevertheless his name was involved with all those that were the object of the political polemics of 1792. On 10th August he was numbered among the extremist Jacobins, and it was just after that day that an incident occurred which, when placed in juxtaposition with the one we are about to



relate, sets his strange and usually neglected physiognomy in a special light.

When the echoes of the recent firing could still be heard, when the Assembly, surprised at its unexpected victory, still hesitated on the threshold of the unknown into which it was about to be dragged by the violence of events, Albitte mounted the tribune and in a bitter speech demanded the hurling of the statues of the French kings from their pedestals, to be replaced by the image of Liberty. What image? Nobody knows. The main point is that the act was proposed.

From that day forth the idea appears to beset him. You would say the lawyer cherished a hatred for royal statues. He tracks them out in the parks, he hunts them down from the doorways of the churches. No more statues! He buffets them with the decree of the Convention concerning images of Royalty, and they fall shattered to pieces.

However, that scarce contents him, it seems. The triumph of the Mountain having been assured, he gets himself despatched with Dubois-Crancé to the Departments, on a mission to the armies. Lyons, Marseilles and Toulon in turn witness his passage, girt with the tricolour, his hat adorned with black feathers, rigid as the Law he represents. He happens to be there on 21st January, 1794. He wants to distinguish that anniversary of the execution of the tyrant Capet by a solemn fête, and what he plans is amazing enough.

In the dawn of the cold morning in Ventôse troops are drawn up in battle-array around the guillotine. Behind their serried ranks are the people, who are curious as to the spectacle which Antoine-Louis Albitte is about to afford them. A warlike procession then debouches on

the square, the Conventional marching at its head. The drums roll, on the dry pavement sound the steps of soldiers, and amid all the military din groans the heavy sound of a waggon laden with victims.

There they are, standing up, motionless, as if frozen on that chill morn in which the sky seems pregnant with snow ; leaning against the waggon-sides they are pale as wax. Wax ? Yes, indeed, these are only dressed-up statues, dolls in masks imitating the " despots," the " tyrants," the sovereigns of Europe. There is the King of Prussia ; there is the " Austrian's " brother ; there is Pitt ; all are standing up in the symbolic cart.

As they reach the foot of the guillotine, the assistants bestir themselves, take the wax figures down, and whilst the people shout " Long live the Nation ! " and the drums roll, the lifeless heads are guillotined one after the other, and a bladder swollen with animal blood drenches each in turn.

Thus did Albitte celebrate the anniversary of the King's death. Whether he repeated the experiment later I do not know, but it is doubtful. However, a few months after the execution in effigy, he directed his attention again to a statue : that of the rebellious town of Toulon, symbolised by a woman. He did not deem her worthy of the guillotine and set fire to her.

Nevertheless these proofs of Jacobinism left him in obscurity. The 18th Brumaire, after he had escaped the Thermidorian reaction, caused his appointment as sub-inspector of the reviews. His name became extinct during the Imperial defeat. On Christmas Day, 1812, whilst the Grand Army was evacuating Russian territory, some laggard grenadiers found a corpse on its knees by the side of a road. It was that of Albitte, the review inspector, the man who guillotined the statues.

## II. A SINGULAR VICTIM

ON Sunday, 17th November, 1793, the Revolutionary Tribunal condemned a dog to the death penalty.

A dog !

On that day a former recruiter of the name of Saint-Prix took his place on the steps. There were few people in the hall. The batch of victims was not very large. All were reserving themselves for finer "platoon firing."

Saint-Prix was accused of counter-revolutionary talk. One of his female neighbours had inquired if he was going to mount guard, to which he had replied :

"I'm not made to mount guard with beggars and scoundrels."

And he had added with a regretful sigh :

"I prefer the old order to the new."

This blunder led to his being brought before pitiless judges who struck without appeal allowed. They had found the accused guilty of lesser offences. Saint-Prix's sentence was what everyone expected, but it involved his dog at the same time. It had been trained to give notice of strangers approaching its master's lodging. One day the bearer of an order for Saint-Prix was bitten in the calf by the watchful animal. The Court condemned it and next day, Monday, 18th November, the judgment was executed. The National Archives<sup>1</sup> have preserved the details of the strange trial, and we will reconstitute its epilogue as they give it.

A letter enclosed with the official account informed Fouquier-Tinville about it the same day.

<sup>1</sup> "Archives Nationales," Series W, carton 296, pièce 253.



## "SECTION OF THE TUILERIES.

COMMITTEE

OF

REVOLUTIONARY SURVEILLANCE.

On 28th Brumaire, second year of  
the French Republic one and  
indivisible.

*To Fouquier-Tinville, Public Prosecutor.*

On receipt of the sentence of the Revolutionary Tribunal condemning Saint-Prix to the death penalty and ordering his dog to be killed, we proceeded to execute this last portion of the sentence.

We are sending you the official account drawn up to that effect ; we beg you to reimburse us the expenses to which we have been put.

CHARVET.

LAVILLETTE."

Towards noon the Commissary of the Tuileries Watch Committee, a man called Claude-Charles George, had gone with the police-inspector, Pierre-Louis Hostaux, to a house named "Le Combat du Taureau," which, though the procès-verbal is silent, was probably a public-house of some kind, for it is stated that the house is kept by the Citizen Maclart. On the arrival of the two men, Citizen Maclart being absent, his wife receives the visitors. They solemnly show the astounded woman the Revolutionary Tribunal order commanding the dog's execution. They summon her in the law's name to bring forth the beast, a formality which she obeys without answering.

She goes into the courtyard of the house, removes the animal from the corner where it was slumbering, and leads it to the Commissary and Inspector.

A serious discussion then arises between the august personages. Who is to kill the animal? Pierre-Louis Hostaux or Claude-Charles George? They both refuse, and the Citizeness Maclart emphatically declares herself unable to do what the two men refuse to do. Doubtless to end the discussion she proposes a middle way. A few paces away, at "Le Combat," there is a post of National Guards. From among them might be requisitioned a man who would execute the sentence. Citizeness Maclart's ingenious proposal is accepted, and George, holding firmly in his hand the Order of the Revolutionary Tribunal, runs to the post.

Meanwhile the animal is yelping, jumping, gambolling about. Quickly returns the Commissary of the Tuileries Section accompanied by Citizen Bonneau, sergeant of the Arcis section, belonging to the guard on duty. It is difficult to think the sergeant accepted George's proposal. Doubtless the latter simply used him as a witness. However that may be, he accompanies the Commissary; and in the presence of Citizeness Maclart and the Sergeant, Saint-Prix's dog is done to death with cudgel-blows.

And gravely the four assistants sign the official account of the execution. The woman Maclart no doubt performs the burial of the corpse. The sergeant goes back to his post, the two envoys of the Tuileries Section to their Committee. Justice is done.

### III. THE FURNACE-MERCHANT

THERE was great uproar during the night of 13th to 14th March, 1794. The Cour des Forges in the Rue Neuve-Egalité, formerly Bourbon de Ville-Neuve, is full of shouts, outcry, swearing. What is the trouble at that

untimely hour in the sleeping district? Men rush up, torches light the old walls with their fantastic gleams. The butts of guns resound on the pavement. Windows open and people lean forth in curiosity and disquiet. Who in that time of fear dares swear they will not come and arrest him to-night, seize his papers and take him to the Conciergerie with an escort?

However, the uproar continues in the Rue Neuve-Egalité. The gleam of naked swords flashes through the dark. The groups have stopped before a house. The open door allows the gendarmes to go in and out. Night-capped neighbours gossip at their windows.

"What's happening?"

"Where are they searching?"

"Whom are they going to arrest?"

The questions are lost amid the noise of weapons and raised voices, when of a sudden the strange, incredible, unexpected, stupefying news circulates:

"It's Hébert! They're arresting Père Duchesne!"<sup>1</sup>

And it is true. The furnace-merchant has stopped pleasing, he has become suspect, and that is enough. He will go to the Conciergerie and thence to "the small national window." On this fine, pure, cold March night he goes off amid an armed escort, and people are asking whether at that moment "Père Duchesne is—angry?"

<sup>1</sup> Jacques-René Hébert, called "Père Duchesne" because of the title of the journal he edited, in which he showed himself outrageously foul-mouthed. In private life he was a very polite person. Of obscure condition—he had been ticket-controller at the Variétés—he became famous in a short time, thanks to the violence of *Père Duchesne*. He was appointed substitute to the procurator of the Commune and really reigned at the Hôtel de Ville. Robespierre understood his dangerous power, and [was the lever of his ruin. A few days after "Père Duchesne's" execution, the Revolutionary Tribunal condemned his wife to death at the same time as Camille Desmoulins'.



The noise gradually ceases ; the windows shut ; people return to the beds they left upon this sudden alarm. A single light alone illumines the window of one of the houses in the street. It is the room where the Jacqueline of the furnace-merchant is weeping.

To those interested in the history of the Revolution, Hébert was certain to offer the posthumous curiosity of his home, his private, intimate, familiar life.

In the eyes of his contemporaries he was considerably like the vignette of the moustached and armed sansculotte which used to adorn—should we say “ adorn ” ?—the first page of his famous journal, *Le Père Duchesne*. That, however, was not the appearance he presented to his intimates, to those who came in contact with him. One of them has left us a picturesque, perhaps flattered portrait, which we may suppose to resemble him.

This man whom most grossly repulsive language and most odious abuse had brought to success, wealth and popularity, was gifted with a pleasant, even charming though weak voice. His physique was far from being displeasing, and the engravings of him that have come down to us give the impression of one of those “ dandies ” abominated by Capuchin Chabot.

Père Duchesne had but one religion—sansculottism ; Hébert had but one love—his Jacqueline. His wife's name was really Françoise Goupil. Why the travesty of the name ? No doubt for the same reason as that which caused him to change Jacques-René Hébert into Père Duchesne. The priest Chabot having taken to himself a wife, Hébert took one in turn and chose a nun. Her youth had been spent quietly in the Convent of the Sisters of the Conception, dividing her time between the duties of piety and walking in the fine shady garden on to

which gave the windows of Dupley House, where Maximilien de Robespierre lodged.

The convent being closed by the Revolution, Françoise Goupil was near finding herself on the streets. She met the furnace-merchant and the love-idyl began.

Never was a household more united, never turtle-doves tasted more completely the charms of honeymoon. Did they not follow in this the example given in most of the households of those terrible Conventionals, those savages of '93 who mowed down heads like the tyrant of old who cut down the flowers with his stick as he walked along? Such a paradoxical life was that of Hébert and Françoise Goupil.

Their household might rival that of Danton and Louise Gely, of Fouché and Bonne-Jeanne Coiquand (or Coignaud) who, although ugly, thin, short and deformed, appeared in her husband's eyes "the model of her sex." Joseph Lebon, the exterminator of Arras, worshipped his "Minnie," the clever, delightful Elizabeth Regniez, for whom he used to reserve the spectacle of guillotins to the tune of "Ça Ira" from the theatre-balcony at Arras; Philippe Lebas, a touching, heroic figure, loved his "Babet," Elizabeth Duplay; and we know with what tender affection Fouquier-Tinville's heart overflowed for Henriette d'Aucourt, his second wife, by the heartrending letter he wrote her four hours before his death.

What more pleasing than the Desmoulins' family playing and gambolling about in the little country-house which delighted Lucile so much, the gentle, sweet Lucile who was doomed later to be borne in the same cart as Père Duchesne's Jacqueline? And the love of Billand-Varenne, the red-wigged man, for the German Angélique

Doye, who twice married again in the lifetime of her husband who was deported !

Again nothing could be more mournful and touching than the suicide of old Roland, whom his wife, in letters to her lover the Girondin Buzot, calls " old uncle." For her sake on 10th November, 1793, he stabbed himself twice at Radepont with a dagger, not wishing to survive her and hating " to remain on an earth covered with crimes."

In all this appears the contradictoriness of life often imposed by politics on its zealots.

It was the same with Hébert. Whilst the most awful blasphemies proceeding from " Père Duchesne's mighty wrath " were driving the suburbs crazy with delight, he would invite friends to his clean, modest table and would beg Palloy, " architect and patriot for life," to offer him soup, in a curious letter I have chanced upon :

" PATRIOT,

I never received in my life a more flattering gift than that which you have just sent me. It shall be put right in the centre of my shop, the sacred stone of the Rights of Man. I shall look at it whenever I have occasion to speak of kings ; it will recall their offences to me, my bile will be stirred ; you may then guess at my mighty wrath. To prove to you his gratitude Père Duchesne and his Jacqueline will come and eat your soup, but under condition of revenge.

Your fellow-citizen,

Substitute to the Procurator of the Commune,  
the real furnace-merchant—— ! "

As a prisoner he became again what he naturally was, weak even to cowardice, and his death was one of the most deplorable seen during the Reign of Terror.



A huge crowd had gathered, as the waggons moved along, on a splendid day in Germinal.

"Ah! the dog!" said some, "he won't swear again, but he must be in a devilish rage!"<sup>1</sup>

"All his furnaces have been broken up," said others.

And the clamorous rabble shouted again and again:

"To the guillotine, Père Duchesne!"<sup>2</sup>

The mob showed him pipes and furnaces on the tops of canes and cudgels, but the poor wretch, insensible to this final and ironical insult, lay in lamentable abandonment along the side of the tumbrel. Perhaps he was thinking of what he had written a few months before in No. 304 of his *Père Duchesne* regarding the trial of the Girondins:

"You worthy —, who composed the Revolutionary Tribunal, not so much shilly-shally. Is so much ceremony needful for getting the scoundrels shortened whom the people have already judged?" That day Fouquier had not amused himself by "shilly-shally" with Père Duchesne.

Now, when the cart is taking him through the loudly clamorous streets to the Place de la Révolution, his glory is turned to ridicule and furnishes the subject of numerous couplets, which are sung whilst dancing is started:

"Ciel! Il était si patriote,  
Il faisait des discours si beaux!  
Pourquoi siffle-t-il la linotte,  
Le fameux marchand de fourneaux?"

On nous dit que, pour condescendre  
Au plus infâme des complots,  
C'était pour tout réduire en cendre  
Qu'il chauffait si bien ses fourneaux!

<sup>1</sup> Police Report of Inspector Pourvoyeur, 5 Germinal, Year II.  
"Archives Nationales," Series W, carton 174, pièce 65.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

On assure que l'Angleterre  
 Qui nous prenait pour des nigauds,  
 Envoyait le charbon de terre  
 Dont il allumait ses fourneaux.

Pour plaire à la troupe insensée  
 De tous les fantômes royaux,  
 Il mitonnait une Vendée  
 Sur la braise de ses fourneaux.

Mais on dit que Fouquier-Tinville  
 A découvert tous les tuyaux  
 Par lesquels, du fond de son île,  
 Monsieur Pitt soufflait ses fourneaux.

Aussi Fouquier, qui toujours rôde,  
 Ayant éventé ses complots,  
 Lui dit : " On joue à la main chaude  
 Quand on chauffe ainsi ses fourneaux."

Quoi ! ne savais-tu pas, grand maître,  
 Célèbre diseur de bons mots,  
 Qu'on met le nez à la fenêtre  
 Quand on chauffe trop ses fourneaux ?

Ma foi, tant pis, malheur au traître !  
 Je ne fais pas grâce aux marauds,  
 Ami, la Nation peut-être  
 Héritera de tes fourneaux !"<sup>1</sup>

On the scaffold a more refined piece of punishment awaited him ; stretched on the platform, his neck in the hole, the knife was allowed to hang for several minutes "over his criminal neck," whilst the executioner's assistants waved their hats about his head, shouting : " Long live the Republic ! "

He was executed last, and the corpse of the furnace-merchant went and rejoined those of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette in the common pit of the Madeleine cemetery.

<sup>1</sup> This song, whose author is J.-J. Dussault, appeared in the journal of the advocate Guffroy, *Le Rougyff ou le Franck en vedette*, on the very morning of Hébert's execution, 4 Germinal (24th March, 1794). It became popular in a few hours, was known by heart, sung everywhere.



"LE PÈRE DUCHESNE"





#### IV. MARIE-JOSEPH CHÉNIER

IN the Year VII there was a household well known in Paris, which highly amused the dandies of the Palais Royal, who detailed its scandals to the "nymphs" of the Galeries des Bois, who in turn spread them abroad to the four winds of Fame.<sup>1</sup> It was the ménage of Marie-Joseph Chénier,<sup>2</sup> the Conventional, the brother of André Chénier, the poet.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We have compiled this curious chapter of Marie-Joseph Chénier's private life from old Mme. Chénier's little-known papers and letters, which were published by M. Etienne Charavay in the "Revue des documents historiques," Vol. V, p. 78 *sqq.*, 1878, and Vol. I, 2nd series, p. 143 *sqq.*, 1879.

<sup>2</sup> Marie-Joseph Chénier was born on 28th August, 1764, in Constantinople, where his father was Consul. Beginning as a dragoon officer, he abandoned sword for pen, had his tragedy *Charles IX* played in 1789, was named Deputy to the Convention and after the Revolution a Member of the Tribunal. He is the author of the "Chant du départ."

<sup>3</sup> Whilst his brother Marie-Joseph embraced the Jacobin cause, André Chénier remained a partisan of the old régime. He, too, was born in Constantinople in 1763. His political rôle was limited to lively criticism of the Republican Government in violent articles or blasphemous poems. Arrested as a suspect in 1794, he was incarcerated at Saint-Lazare, where he had for gaol companion the poet Boucher. Boucher, who was born at Montpellier, 22nd February, 1745, when arrested as a suspect, was granted the favour of keeping with him in prison his son Emile, whose education he was finishing, spending in that way the long hours of captivity, which he divided between this duty and his correspondence with his wife, published afterwards by his son-in-law, M. Guillois. Taken from Saint-Lazare at the same time as André Chénier, transferred to the Conciergerie, and handed over to the Tribunal, such was the whirlwind rapidity of the events in which he was involved that he was unable to write even a farewell to his wife. So his last existing letter is given here.

"The 21st Messidor, Year II, at 11 o'clock in the morning.

And I, too, my kind friend, I remark all the steps of time. This is the beginning of the eleventh month after 9 or 10 o'clock. Don't be

Old Mme. Chénier, after her husband's death on 7th Prairial, Year III (29th May, 1795), had gone to live with her favourite son.

She did not find him alone. A certain lady called La Bouchardie was already filling the office of mistress of the house. She was tall, still handsome in spite of the menaces of age, a solid woman with the supple hand and language of ladies of her class. Despite the advice of his friend's, and especially of the Abbé Sièyes, who recommended him not to appear in public "with certain women," Chénier could not make up his mind to break with this pugnacious mistress who represented brutal love to him. The servants and the portress were quite devoted to her, for the excellent reason that she paid liberally for their services.

Old Mme. Chénier had hardly arrived when there arose between her and La Bouchardie a sullen, silent warfare

discouraged; we shall both of us have opportunity yet to make a reminiscence of this sad date. Patience! Liberty is a fruit which, like all others, takes time to ripen. In truth, as I am in a hot-house, it appears as if the gathering time ought to come quicker, but unfortunately nothing occurs in a hurry. So we must wait; that is what I am doing. Imitate me.

Emile had all the trouble in the world to don the girl's jacket you sent him, until the tailor has repaired all his clothes. He was walking yesterday morning in the yard with his head lowered and an ashamed air about him by the side of Chabron, whom he clung to by his coat-tail. All the passers-by said to him: 'Good day, Mlle. Ninette!' And he said to the 'wise-man': 'Everyone is insulting me.'"

At the Conciergerie Boucher had his portrait done by the painter Leroy, a pupil of Luvée, and, sending it to his wife and children, he inscribed this quatrain on it:

" Ne vous étonnez pas, objets sacrés et doux,  
Si quelqu'air de tristesse obscurcit mon visage;  
Quand un savant crayon dessinait cette image,  
J'attendais l'échafaud et je pensais à vous."

These were his last verses. A few minutes after, he mounted with André Chénier the executioner's waggon on the 7th Thermidor, 1794.



such as may be waged by two women destined to live together continually under the same roof. When the mistress was absent the mother would complain to the son, would echo all the rumours in circulation about her "daughter-in-law."

"She has the reputation of scragging her lovers," she would say, "of abusing and ill-treating them worse than the most brutal man, and of beating them."

Marie-Joseph would be content to answer, though he knew the truth :

"Perhaps it's all exaggerated."

What presently happened gave the lie to his optimism.

During Thursday to Friday night, 26th Vendémiaire, Year VII (17th October, 1798), Mme. Chénier was suddenly awakened from sleep about one in the morning by an infernal noise in her son's room. There were cries, shouts, curses, yells, appeals to the police. She quickly puts on a nightgown and runs to the place of disturbance.

A fine spectacle met her sight on the threshold of Marie-Joseph's room. On the floor had been thrown all the bed-coverings, whilst pillows lay in corners, furniture was upset, and right in the middle of the disorder were heard the Conventional's laments.

He did not lament without reason. La Bouchardie, "drunk with eau-de-vie, foul-mouthed as a water-carrier and foaming with fury," says Mme. Chénier, spat in her lover's face whilst boxing his ears in the soundest and loudest possible manner. The servants, among them one called Auguste, had run up at the noise.

Doubtless Mme. Chénier remembered just then that Greek blood throbbed in her veins, heroic blood which had flowed on all the great battlefields of Hellas, for she

rushed at the revengeful mistress, gripped her tightly despite her threats to throttle her, and pushed her outside. The servant Auguste took good care not to interfere, for, says Mme. Chénier again, "he is won over," and received 1000 francs from that "arrogant, shameless, wicked beast of a woman."

In spite of this rumpus, in spite of the porteress being forbidden to admit "that woman" again, Madame la Bouchardie returns in triumph four days later to the apartments which were the theatre of her noisy night-exploits. Marie-Joseph "has yielded to the kindness of his heart." As things are so, Mme. Chénier seeks a remedy, and thinks she has found it in advising her son to marry. In order to persuade him she uses the most decisive of arguments, because her son has "a soul virtuous by birth." She tells him with an emphasis that is touching in the mother who knows into whose hands her son is delivered, in what arms his affection slumbers, she tells him he ought "to agree to charge himself with the honourable bonds of marriage. There are inconveniences, but everything has them; at any rate those belonging to this virtuous tie do not cause the blush of shame. Where virtue is, is happiness. It is not otherwise."

Vain illusions, superfluous hopes! Love brought about the fall of Troy and Marie-Joseph was not equal to Priam. However, the scandal on that October night seems to have had some influence on his relations with the Amazon. In 1799 she changed her name of La Bouchardie for that of Madame Le Beau de l'Esparda de Maisonnave. But this was only a source of the most platonic gratification to Mme. Chénier and she soon even lost all the advantage of it.

One day the new Madame de l'Esparda returned and settled down in the Conventional's apartments. The benevolent husband had withdrawn to Montereau, a few months of living with La Bouchardie having convinced him of an invincible "incompatibility of temper."

On 6th November, 1808, death took André Chénier's mother. Standing by the death-bed the two lovers saw the cold shadow of the eternal darkness falling on the beautiful face which had shed so many tears since the terrible holocaust of 7th Thermidor at the Barrière du Trône-Renversé.

Age had come, and the Convention was dead. Grace then seemed to touch the once fearsome mistress. Marie-Joseph, ill and ruined, lived with her the painful life of those who see the past which they survive crumbling about them. He was ill, La Bouchardie nursed him with a tender, loyal zeal; he was poor, dunned by his creditors, she sold her diamonds to wipe off his debts.

But poor Mme. Chénier was no longer there to witness the tardy reparation, the *mea culpa* of the old mistress in her repentance. The ex-Conventional passed away in her trusty arms on 10th January, 1811. He bequeathed all his MSS. to her, a watch, his portrait painted by Ducreux, some books and a few effects. Constantin-Xavier de Chénier, the dead man's brother, did not forget the mourner. By a declaration dated 19th January, 1811, he made her his general executrix and recognised her as his sister.

Her part was ended. It had begun in scandal, it finished in piety. It is only the devil who becomes a hermit in the long run.



## V. AN ARTIST IN WAX

I DO not know why so many Revolutionary dramas had winter and snow for their setting. We have just observed the scenery in which Albitte unfolded his tragi-comedy and that in which the everlasting sleep overtook him. The icy wind of Frimaire, the snow of Nivôse combine the gloom of nature with all those tragic happenings (even as a romancer would do), in such a manner that history often seems under the circumstances to be an ingeniously conceived story.

The following mournful incident, which took place on 7th Frimaire, Year II (7th December, 1793), occurred in similar surroundings.

The dull shades of twilight were already enveloping the cemetery of the Madeleine, otherwise known as the Ville-l'Evêque, in which rested so many victims of the Revolutionary Tribunal. A man was waiting at the side of a freshly dug grave and, to protect himself from the keen, boisterous night-wind, had raised the collar of his bottle-green cloak and shiveringly wrapped himself in its broad folds. After a few moments he seemed to hearken, to watch for the heavy sound of a waggon in the distance. The noise grew louder, came nearer. At the further end, towards the cemetery entrance, the hinges of the carriage-gate were heard to creak and the cart, whose arrival the man apparently expected, shaking on the ice-bound earth, reached the grave by the grand avenue. Big red drops were trickling through the straw. Whilst the horse was still panting three men dragged out of the straw a heavy thing that gave a dull sound as it touched the ground. One of them then took hold of a smaller object and presented it to the waiting man.

It was a decapitated head in which blood was clotted in wavy locks of hair, light-coloured and curly as a child's.<sup>1</sup> The man took the head, doubtless with some feeling of repulsion which he soon mastered ; for was it not for that purpose that he had waited at this ill-omened hour in the silent cemetery ?

And he set about his task. He took from under his cloak a piece of soft wax, some oil, a pair of pincers. Falling on his knees beside the decapitated head which he had set on soil drawn from the grave, he modelled it, restoring with an adroit, expert movement of the thumb the features which had been rather put out of shape, parting the hair from a forehead which was still pure despite wrinkles, hair which the sweat of the agony had glued to it.

Thanks to his labour, Curtius,<sup>2</sup> the founder and director of the museum of wax heads at the Palais Egalité, formerly Royal, was enabled to exhibit in his cabinet the authentic likeness of Jeanne Gomar de Vaubernier, Countess Dubarry.<sup>3</sup> It was her truncated

<sup>1</sup> Mme. Vigée-Lebrun, "Souvenirs."

<sup>2</sup> Curtius had founded a museum of waxes at the Palais Royal, where he exhibited the busts of all the great men of the period. It was the Musée Grévin of the time. At the gate was a mannequin dressed in a uniform. Curtius changed its attire on each change of Government. In 1793, it was a sansculotte ; in 1806 a grenadier of the Imperial Guard ; in 1814, at the time of the invasion of Paris by the foe, it was a Cossack ; when the Emperor returned from Elba in 1815, it was again a grenadier, and finally after Waterloo a King's guard.

<sup>3</sup> Marie-Jeanne Bécu was born in 1744 at Vaucouleurs, came to Paris very young and made her début in gallantry under the name of Mlle. Lange. Lebel, the purveyor of Louis XV's Parc aux Cerfs, introduced her to the King, who married her to Count Dubarry. She dominated Louis XV for a long period, and her political favour was as great as her love-power. When she fell into disgrace on the King's death Louis XVI sent her to a convent, which she soon left and went to live in her Château de Louveciennes. Denounced for having been the mistress of "a former tyrant" and having worn mourning for Louis XVI, she was arrested and the Revolutionary Tribunal condemned her to death on 16th Frimaire, Year II. She was executed on the 17th.

corpse which Sanson's cart had just deposited in the cemetery of the Girondins. At eleven the previous night the Revolutionary Tribunal had condemned to death the former courtesan, that sad, unhappy woman whom President Dumas had blamed for "the dissoluteness of her morals, the glaring publicity of her debauches." The royal mistress had expiated on the Revolution scaffold the happy fortunes of past years, the queenship of her beauty and her confidence in an innocence which history has not taken the trouble to prove.

She was buried two paces away from Louis XVI's grave, and Mme. Roland and Charlotte Corday were already sleeping their endless sleep in the same plot of ground. And nothing remained of the Dubarry but the moulded waxen head in a museum where Jean-Paul Marat's wax bust was receiving the public homage of a posthumous, fleeting triumph.



## APPENDIX I

### THE REVOLUTION AGAINST THE QUEEN

#### I

THE following pieces, though they are not directly connected with the subject of this book, will not fail to interest those who are curious about the byways of the great Revolution drama. By grouping together here some pamphlets against the Queen whose last hours we have elsewhere dwelt upon, we try to give an exact idea of the formidable agitation which arose in France against her and gradually but inflexibly thrust her on to the scaffold.

The three pamphlets here quoted are characteristic of it all. The "Dispute" dates from the early days of Marie-Antoinette's captivity, the second appeared shortly before her sentence by the Revolutionary Tribunal, and the third belongs to the very day after her death. Thanks to the kindness of M. Otto Friedrichs, the well-known historian of the Louis XVII-Naundorff question, we are able to give here these three pamphlets with their text *in extenso*. We must express to him our deep gratitude.

It is easy to assign a date to the following pamphlet though it bears no indication. The provision-dealer who comes to ask the Queen for his little bill speaks of fifty-one days' feeding, beginning with 24th August, i.e. the day after the entry of the Royal Family into the Temple. This broadsheet therefore dates from the first days of October, 1792. It has eight pages in 8vo.

" GREAT DISPUTE  
BETWEEN

MARIE-ANTOINETTE AND HER TRADESPEOPLE,  
PROVISION-DEALERS, TAILORS, DRESSMAKERS, &C., &C., &C.,  
SEEING HERSELF COMPELLED TO PAY THEM, AND THE  
NATION NO LONGER WISHING TO FURNISH HER WITH  
FUNDS.

THE PROVISION-DEALER.

Madame, I bid you good-day, at the same time I shall beg you to be so good as to cast your eye over the invoice of your expenses incurred at my place of business.

MARIE-ANTOINETTE.

Ah ! It's you, my dear Monsieur Le Page ! Really I am only too glad to see you ; how is Madame La Page, and all the dear family ? Come, send me your little Suzette, I want to be very kind to her, she is charming, the child.

P. D.

I thank you, madame, if you would be pleased to see in your book what I have had the honour of providing you since you have been here, I am astonishingly in want of money, madame, astonishingly in want.

M. A.

I know, my dear Monsieur Le Page, I know that that accursed money is inconceivably, strangely, horribly, frightfully, atrociously difficult to find ! It is truly a very great folly on the part of mankind to attach so much value to a little yellow or white mud ; now tell me . . . but my dear friend, Monsieur Le Page, your face is charming, you are as fresh as a rose. It's lovely, really most lovely.

P. D.

Madame, really, I am confused ; if madame would kindly think for a minute of the purpose that brings me here, she would oblige me in my humble way.

M. A.

I! I'm always thinking of it, my dear sir, à propos . . . What news have you for me, because we are quite walled up here! Oh, the rascally fellows! *Mon Dieu*, the rascally fellows!

P. D.

Madame, my news is that everything has gone to top prices in the markets, that you can scarcely get what you want with money or assignats, and I don't know where to turn.

M. A.

I believe you, my dear sir, I'm convinced of it, quite convinced, but what can be done? One must be patient. Yes, one must be patient, otherwise . . . one would lose . . . one would lose . . . patience.

P. D.

Madame, here's the bill. . . . It dates from 14th August, the first year of equality. Account of provisions supplied to their former Majesties . . . Monsieur and Madame Bourbon.

M. A. (*interrupting*).

What's all that? You have simply to put, "Account of provisions supplied to Their Majesties——"

P. D.

Madame, you will permit me to observe——

M. A.

I know what you're going to say before you speak. . . . Let's see to your bill. . . . Read it yourself. . . . Reassure yourself, my dear sir, reassure yourself! No ceremony, since the nation has decreed equality, but still we are not comrades; however, it's all the same. Come now, read——

P. D.

On 14th August, entrée of fricassee of chicken à la cuiller; soup for four; sauce-piquante; eel à la tartare; pâte au jus; compote of pigeon—64l.



### 316 BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TERROR

M. A.

That's good—64l. I don't trouble about prices, everybody has to live.

P. D.

On the 15th the same dishes, with the addition of two capons au grossel, three roasted ; forty bottles of wine for M. Bourbon.

Total for the day—180l.

M. A.

Good ! Yes, that's it, 180 livres. The next ?

P. D.

We then have 35 cups of chocolate, six jugs of cream des barbades, but that will be put down in another account.

M. A.

Yes, put it down in the other account, it won't make a muddle.

P. D.

Madame sees clearly that I am not trying to best her, I am practising the greatest economy. Up to to-day, the expenses have been the same all along ; so, madame, all we have to do is to multiply 180 liv. by 51, which comes to . . . 9180 liv.

M. A.

Yes, 9180 livres. You ought to provision us up to 10,000 livres so as to make a round sum of it, for you know perfectly that that does not look well.

P. D.

My sole desire is to please madame, but . . . the fact is . . .

M. A.

The fact is ? . . .

P. D.

The fact is my means do not allow of my making any advance whatever, I'm not worth a sou.

M. A.

But you can borrow, my dear man ; what ! a fellow like you without credit ? Certainly I have got there a bonus of 10,000 livres on the Caisse de l'extraordinaire. . . .

P. D.

Hé ! madame, all the bonus is now good for is for you to wrap your needles in it.

M. A.

What do you mean ?

P. D.

That your debts are no longer paid at the Caisse de l'extraordinaire, madame, and therefore your bonus can't be of any use to me.

M. A.

In that case, settle things for yourself, I haven't any more money to give you.

P. D.

Madame, that's not straightforward of you ; I have advanced mine in respect of you, and it must obviously be repaid.

M. A.

I know that I have advanced my money, you have advanced yours, but what do you wish me to pay you with ?

P. D.

Good gracious ! madame, when anybody has not the means of paying his tradespeople, he does not make use of them.

M. A.

Don't shout so loud, sir, you are bursting my ears— Besides, is that the way to talk to a queen ?

P. D.

Morbleu ! madame, a queen like you is not worth the vilest quēan of the streets. At any rate, if she takes 10 sols of goods, she pays, and, besides, she proportions her purse to her mouth.

318 BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TERROR

M. A.

Let someone bring me a bouillon.

P. D.

Eh ! who can bring it, except me ?

M. A.

Well ! then, go and fetch it.

P. D.

It's very easy for you to say that ; but to get yourself obeyed, no, because that depends on me.

M. A.

I must have it.

P. D.

Pay me.

M. A.

No ; you shan't have any money.

P. D.

Oh ! parbleu ! I shall see jolly well that I am paid.

M. A.

I defy you.

P. D.

You shan't have a bit of beef . . . not a crumb of bread till I'm paid the whole debt. And that's not all ; I'm going to tell your dressmaker, your coiffeur, your hosier, your milliner, your draper, your bootmaker not to advance you the least thing you ask for.

M.A.

Get out of here, you rascal——

P. D.

The rascals are the people who make others work and who pay for it with such silliness as yours. Besides, without me you have nothing to eat ; now tell me if you will pay me. With



four francs a day you will not be able to have such fare as you have had up to now.

M. A.

Ah ! great Heavens ! four francs a day !

P. D.

Yes, and it's much more than you ought to have, with the feelings you show.

M. A. (*pays him*).

Well ! sir, I will give you 200 livres on account.

P. D.

I am not a tyrant . . . I accept . . .

M. A.

There it is.

P. D.

Many thanks ; now here are 100 sols which I owe you back. It is as well to tell you that it is the nation which pays me since your bill of fare is settled. You have deceived France long enough, there is no great harm in your being duped by a man whom you wanted again to deceive. Your servant, madame. You will have for dinner soup, stew, a cutlet, two sols' worth of bread, a dish of dessert and a half-bottle of wine at 15 centimes.

M. A. (*tearing off his wig*).

Give me back those 200 livres, you rascal !

P. D. (*in heroic tones*).

My wig is yours . . . your money is mine . . . madame . . . keep the wig. . . . I give you my word of honour that my victuals and my wine, like my fricassee, are at your service. . . . Good-bye, queen of the past. . . .

M. A.

'O rage ! O despair ! O chagrin ! O fury !  
Who can avenge me on this wicked tradesman ?'

No, I can't stand it any more. . . . I wish I could invent some new curses on those hellish sansculottes! But it's in vain. What's the use of forming hopes of harm to them! They succeed everywhere! And I, I no longer have anybody in my service! The only dagger I possess is a wooden fork . . . and then it's only at meal-times! It would be better not to live, but I have no longer the courage to die!

PREVOST."

## II

This second pamphlet, which is mainly political, is particularly curious because of the preoccupation shown by the author about the Queen's fate. It is one of the few occasions on which the personality of the Dauphin Louis XVII is introduced into such matters. The pamphlet is extremely rare and is not to be found in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Like the preceding, it forms part of the collection of M. Otto Friedrichs.

### "WHAT SHALL WE DO

WITH

MARIE-ANTOINETTE

WHO IS DOUBTLESS INSPIRING HER SON, IN THE PRISON OF THE TEMPLE, WITH THE HATRED AND THE FURY WHICH TRANSPORT HER AGAINST THE FRENCH PEOPLE; AND SHE PAYS HIM THE HONOURS WHICH SHE THINKS ARE DUE TO LOUIS XVII.

Shall we make a good woman of her? Shall we say that she has been an honest woman, a beneficent queen, a chaste queen? Oh! we shall take good care not to; we should be given the lie by the whole of Europe and the other parts of the universe. If the shades of her imbecile and perfidious spouse could speak, they would be right in accusing us of imposture and stupidity; they would complain of the fatal ill-luck of having known her, listened to her, since it is perfectly certain this intriguing and cruel Messalina, by

offences of every kind, brought down her husband from the most brilliant throne on earth to the eternal opprobrium of punishment.

Frenchmen and patriots, we are persuaded of this sad truth ; but after having got rid of that tyrant, that traitor, after having given the universe the example of a refined and generous people, who know how to love great men and punish scoundrels : What shall we do and what ought we to do with Marie-Antoinette of Austria ?

In what relation ought we to consider her ? And how ought we to behave ? How ought we to treat her and regard her ? Should she be considered as a criminal subject, as an incendiary monster ? Ought we to keep her as a hostage ?

Let us coolly examine these interesting questions, and throw some light on the politics and duties of our Deputies.

If we regard Antoinette of Austria as a hostage, the politicians of Europe intend that, forgetting all the horrors of this execrable woman, we should let her impulsive nephew hope to demand of us and keep with him that infernal creature, for whom at this moment his heart pleads and fights as much as his pride and his imprudence. Do politics require that, forgetting the laws of Nature and reason, we should regard her as a foreigner, as a being precious to all the tyrants, or as a weapon, a means of crushing the coalition of the princes conspiring against us ?

Moreover, ought politics to be considered at all by a just and free people, which only claims the respect and esteem of nations because of its immovable attachment to the rights of man and the equality of conditions ?

Would it not be of dangerous consequence to offer Europe so ridiculous an inconsistency as that of the condemnation and punishment of the tyrant, together with pusillanimous condescension for a woman still more criminal than he and his accomplices ?

Would it not be letting the despots of the earth see that the French Republic has some feelings of fear ?

I clearly foresee that an infinite number of our timorous senators, frightened by their own shadows, would wish to impress upon us the terrors by which they are assailed, by



informing us of dangers created in their weak brains ; for I am quite willing to believe that the majority of these political praters are of good faith and are not gangrened by aristocratic inspirations nor salaried by the persecutors of the peoples.

I likewise do not ignore the existence of a hellish cabal, a numerous cabal in the bosom of our Republic, which for the last four years has been marching and proceeding in a direction opposite to that of our Revolution, which is using all that remains to it of methods and dialectics and sophisms to seduce the feeblest heads and most timid hearts, to encourage the most rascally and the most selfish of our sham brothers, in order to induce them to adopt their subversive principles and their anti-patriotic morals, in order to make them climb down from the rights of independence and freedom to the ignominy of slavery.

But will not the majority of our Republican and philosophic Deputies lose patience some day at so many pitiable contradictions ? Will they not appreciate them at their true value ? Will they not compare them to trembling or perfidious and irresolute women ? Will they not grow tired of their too long complaisance in listening to them, and will they not have serious grounds for an appeal to the provinces on the subject, in order to segregate them, to chastise them and guarantee the entire nation against the treacherous blows which those oily traitors are trying to strike us ?

If we consider Antoinette as she deserves, that is to say, from her true standpoint, if we judge her by her crimes against the people, her only and lawful sovereign, can we help punishing her exemplarily and with the shortest delay, in order to efface all ideas unfavourable to our cause, to sustain the energy of our character and our principles of truth, severity, courage, greatness and equality ?

If we pass in memory all this woman's traits, who more than she has brought every crime to its lowest depth ? Who has rendered herself guilty of so many atrocities ? The slightest of her vices has been the most unbridled debauchery and dissoluteness. Never did the bitterest enemy strike more dangerous blows at his enemy than this abominable and

perverted Megæra has struck at France. Do our law-makers fear that the Tribunal which should judge her has not sufficient proof of the offences to condemn her ?

Certainly not : else would they be blind or would pretend to be so ; they would fall into the follies of the Pythonism of antiquity, which is so ridiculous and so much scoffed at.

To pretend that subjects of greater gravity, of more serious importance ought to busy them and exact their sole attention, is a quibble that would take nobody in ; for the indispensable remanding to the criminal tribunal of the Department, which has witnessed all this monster's infamies, cannot involve any discussion without unmasking the clique of intriguers already made known during the trial of the cruellest of tyrants. But it is conceivable they would understand well enough the politics of their self-interest, to wish to persuade people that injustice has been done them in the current ideas about their subterranean and clandestine intelligence. They would then be the first to support this demand, which is so indispensable to the Republic's safety.

Had we not besides to reproach this wretched woman with all the horrors of the Frédégondes and the Medicis, her continual depredations, her horrible dilapidations, her cruelties, her persecutions, her perfidies, her incestuous complaisances, her monstrous lavishness towards the accomplices of her debauches and perversities, has she not clearly summoned on her head all the severity of the laws ? And did ever criminal combine so many offences that the steel of justice should fall on him ?

In fact what shall we do with Antoinette ? Should we let the number of her crimes be increased by yet fresh ones ? Would not our legislators be then themselves accomplices ?

Let her live : does not that mean completing the perversion of an innocent boy, leaving her the means and the time to carry on new troubles and new murders ceaselessly among us, and to prepare for vengeance against the heroic defenders of country and freedom ?

Do we doubt that since her husband's just punishment Marie-Antoinette has not again become chargeable with treason to the nation, by the deadly lessons she has inculcated

and is inculcating in her son, by making him swallow deep gulps of the poison and gall of revenge, by making him regret his past grandeur and his supreme rank ?

Does she not speak to him of his father, whom she represents to him as the martyr of a revolted nation ? Does she not inspire him with a sovereign scorn, an eternal indignation at the French ? Does she not nourish him with the spirit of tyranny, rage and cruelty which is consuming and devouring her ? Do we not see her in harmony with all the tyrants of Europe, and shall we believe she will not longer use her active and maleficent genius to keep up with them a correspondence death-dealing to the French Republic ?

What is the conclusion of these sage reflections ? Ought we to display before the eyes of the universe the shameful spectacle of our weakness ?

No, generous Republicans, we have on our side the sacred rights of Nature and justice ; let us show ourselves worthy of the liberty we have conquered. Let us cement it with blood. All men are subject to the laws. Reason bids it. Public security ordains it. We hardly know the path of true honour, let us not go from it before having trod it out clearly for our children. Let us prove all the despots of the earth united cannot force our fetters again upon us ; and to defy them, let the cruel, let the accursed Antoinette expiate in her turn her abominations and her offences before the sun ; let her perish ignominiously on the scaffold where her savage spouse would perhaps not have expired without her horrible counsels and her execrable conduct.

BY A TRUE REPUBLICAN."

### III

" Marie-Antoinette au diable " is among the rare broad-sheets that appeared just after the Queen's death. It is a fragment broadly significant of the posthumous pamphlets the last of which appeared in 1793. This one forms the first part of the " Confession dernière et testament de Marie-Antoinette," where it fills five pages (3 to 8), whilst two other pieces, " Dispositions dernières de la veuve Capet " and



"Confession dernière de Marie-Antoinette," constitute the remainder of the volume, which is preceded by a frontispiece with the legend :

*"La tête en bas, ah ! quel funeste sort !*

*Je l'ai bien mérité, mais quelle affreuse mort !"*

## "MARIE-ANTOINETTE TO THE DEVIL

### EPISTLE TO HER GODFATHER

Accursed monarch of hell ! O you who presided at my birth, and directed all the acts of my life, to whom rather than to you can I render account of the reflections which are agitating me at this moment, at this terrible moment for me, when the justice of a Republican People, really worthy of being so, is engaged in sending me a passport whose destination is to be limited to your Empire ?

I do not know, lord Satan, what you have done with the shade of Capet, of execrable memory ; but allow me to claim for my own the position of fourth Fury, and I promise you in advance to surpass Alecto, Tisiphone and Megæra in cruelties.

I have as a warrant for what I dare to promise you, the rage that stirs me, a rage which I am forced to recognise as powerless, but which would only be the more terrible if the Place de la Révolution were the *ne plus ultra* of my offences.

Time presses, and it is no longer the moment to ponder things. As I claim to fulfil the worthy duties of a Fury, I must at least, O accursed monarch of hell, give you the proofs justifying my claim : the details of them will be succinct, and the more succinct in that the horse is at the cart and the guillotine is awaiting me with as much eagerness as the gallows have claimed their prey before.

So before putting my head in that hole ; before casting a last convulsive look at the Divinity of the French,<sup>1</sup> I am going to speak to you as a sincere woman, and for the first

<sup>1</sup> "The Statue of Liberty, turning its back to the lovers of the amiable guillotine, adds to their despair. Ah ! what a cheery sight it is, to be sure !" (Note by the writer of the pamphlet.)

time. Upon this avowal, the prelude to my frankness, could you call it in doubt ?

I am a monster. Eh ! who may know it better than he who, mastering my soul, knew how to breathe into me the ardent love of crime which constituted my joy from the tenderest years ? Now, I am not telling to you anything new, any more than to the whole of Europe—which knows. The historical essays in my private life have left nothing to be desired : I have read and reread them rapturously ; their colouring is natural, the touch masculine and energetic, and doubtless it would be desirable that this describing of my freaks of gallantry should be in the hands of all pretty women ; it would be a safe guide for success.

To break off this subject ; for I tell you again, time presses ; I every instant expect the executor of the Tribunal's sentences, who lodges above me, to come and place his expeditive paw on my majesty, which, in that event, would content itself with the simple rôle of a *gourgandine* in the low quarters of Paris : for it is all very well to plume yourself on firmness and to wish to play the sovereign to the last moment, when a dreaded hand<sup>1</sup> takes hold of you by the chignon,<sup>2</sup> when the deadly scissors have cut off your fleece, whether royal or marchioness, noble or mechanic, Catholic or Protestant, you have to go through with it to the end ; there are only a few more moments to wind up the tragedy ; the triumphal car is in the yard ; soon it will be off ; a trip in Paris puts you in the position of gathering blessings à la Duchesne, and the catastrophe ends with an injection into the basket. Ah ! what a—grimace for a once-crowned head !—

I hear the hellish din of the bolts, which shelter France from my execrable vengeance, and I am simultaneously introduced to a priest and my conductor to the Place de la Révo-

<sup>1</sup> “ Not a very noble expression for an Antoinette ; but at the Conciergerie people are not so nice in their language.” (Note by the writer of the pamphlet.)

<sup>2</sup> “ The more vigorously we go the more hair dressed *en boudins* will be in fashion. How many citizenesses have already attached on to the nape of their necks Charlotte Corday's infamous head-dress ! ” (Note by the writer of the pamphlet.)

lution. As for the priest I have permission to refuse him : his admission is not *de rigueur* ; but as for the other one, ah ! it's a different affair ! Let him cut, let him do what he pleases. I am his now and shall soon be entirely thine, yes, entirely thine, accursed monarch of hell ; and if anything comforts me, it is that in your sombre kingdom I shall be able doubtless to embrace the dear shades of Marie-Thérèse, of Joseph II, of Leopold and a quantity of others whom the brief time accorded me does not allow naming.

As for my fat porpoise of a husband, I don't want and ought not to hear about him : imbecile and peevish, drunken and obstinate during his life, what could I expect of him on the borders of Phlegethon, now that he has left above the little brains that remained to him, by a subtraction that, i' faith, was well conceived ?

Make a Cyclops of him ; even now his shifty eye will not be out of place with those of the Titans' grandsons ; besides, he is a locksmith king. Eh, well, let him forge away. Oh ! he is not a bad acquisition for that job ; but since I have strong reasons for not recognising him as a ladies' man, as soon as I shall have passed the bascule, I want neither to see nor to hear him.

I am about to leave this world by a road which is getting more and more worn. But a half-hour's interval puts me in a position to set down my last wishes and arrangements. I leave together with you my intimate and familiar correspondence, in order to occupy myself with them. Here is to the pleasure of seeing you ; it will not be long."



## APPENDIX II

### THE BLOOD OF THE PEOPLE'S FRIEND

THE blood which drenched Marat's bathroom has come down to our times, constituting the supreme relic of Charlotte Corday's victim. A picturesque article was devoted to it a few years ago which we reproduce here, as being in the nature of a document.<sup>1</sup>

"The Baron de Vinck and his son have put together a collection which includes everything that has appeared in images regarding men and events from 1770 till our own days.

It is a veritable treasure from the documentary standpoint. This collection, which includes more than four hundred cartoons, has just been added to the Cabinet des Estampes, by deed of gift drawn by the Baron de Vinck.

Among the unique pieces figuring in the collection may be mentioned the number of the *Ami du Peuple*, which was stained with Marat's blood, 'on the very tablet on the bath' at the moment when Charlotte Corday stabbed him.

This item has a history—unless it was merely a legend.

It is No. 678 of the *Ami du Peuple*, dated Tuesday, 13th August, 1792.

The blood stains the lower left corner of the newspaper and covers this furious text :

'At the first sound of cannon, all those traitors get up to run away ; being restrained by the bloodthirsty reproaches of the passers-by, they go and seek their safety by confounding themselves amongst each other. It was a great blunder of

<sup>1</sup> It was published by M. Georges Montorgueil, in the *Éclair* of 12th May, 1906, under the title : " Une relique de Marat."

the patriot Merlin that he prevented the scoundrels from fleeing, they would have been massacred by the people and we should at last have been free from them.'

This longing for murder which escaped the pen of the most odious of the tyrants engendered by the Revolution has therefore been one year later emphasised by his own blood shed by a woman.

Everything, in appearance—in appearance only—attests the authenticity of this document.

Colonel Maurin, who collected everything that was connected with the Revolution, wrote on the margin of this copy :

'These leaves, stained with Marat's blood, were on the tablet on his bath when he was stabbed by Charlotte Corday. They were gathered together and preserved by Albertine Marat, who kindly sacrificed them to me in order to increase my collection of patriotic manuscripts of the epoch.

MAURIN.

Paris, 24th May, 1837.'

How did these blood-stained leaves come into the Baron de Vinck's possession? A new attestation which goes back forty years will tell us.

'The numbers 506 and 678 of the *Ami du Peuple* stained with Marat's blood passed at Colonel Maurin's death into the collection of Count H. de la Bédoyère, who did not keep them long. Having taken an aversion to them, he obliged my father, his librarian, to take them away. My father gave them to me that I might add them to some documents I possess. On 10th October, 1864, I gave up the two famous numbers to M. le Baron de Vinck to complete his collection of souvenirs of the French Revolution.

ANATOLE FRANCE.

PARIS, 19th October, 1864.'

This copy figured at the Paris Exhibition in 1900. It had been placed under David's picture representing Marat's death. M. Georges Cain recalls, no doubt, the cry of sincere repulsion

which the sight drew from the Princess Mathilde to whom he was doing the honours of the Exhibition.

'What a horror!' cried the Princess.

Anyone coming from the Champ de Mars, from the section of the Retrospective Library, might have cried: 'What a surprise!' For there, too, could be seen displayed a number of the *Ami du Peuple* stained with Marat's blood.

This number had been discovered by M. Paul Dablin, a lucky rummager among the quay stalls, in a copy of a book of Marat annotated by himself, 'Recherches sur le Feu.' It was No. 681 bis of 13th September, 1792, carrying these lines written by the hand of Mademoiselle Albertine Marat:

'A number of Marat's, being a portion of those lying on the tablet on his bath, at the time of his assassination by Charlotte Corday.'

When Etienne Charavay was consulted about this writing he answered that it was certainly the writing of Marat's sister. 'But,' he added, 'to my knowledge there are quite seven or eight numbers of the *Ami du Peuple* all stained with blood which are circulating in the world. I have one in my collection.'

If you recollect that the tablet on which Marat used to write in his bath was very narrow you will ask yourself how it could be encumbered with so many copies of his journal of different dates, and especially what they were doing there.

How, on the other hand, could Mademoiselle Marat, who was not there at the moment of the drama, see these copies, within reach of her brother's hand, on the tablet, and stained with blood as she bears witness?

Marat bled profusely, the blood poured out of his heart in great spurts, it spread everywhere over the ground. It is allowable to think that some numbers of the *Ami du Peuple* were scattered about there, and their author's blood reached them. It is the most plausible explanation that can be given of a sister's fiction.

Having made of her humble lodging the altar where certain intellects, about 1835, held communion with Marat, his sister gave herself up to trading in souvenirs. The *Ami du Peuple*



stained with blood aroused so much curiosity that everybody wanted one—a strange taste!—and the multiplication of copies imposed itself on her. But we may believe that, in order to satisfy the demand, a rabbit's blood was more than once substituted for Marat's."

## APPENDIX III

### THE ACCUSATION AGAINST CHARLOTTE CORDAY

THE formula of accusation drawn up by Fouquier-Tinville, the Public Prosecutor of the Revolutionary Tribunal, against Charlotte Corday,<sup>1</sup> is a document both of capital and curious import, remarkable for the sobriety of Fouquier-Tinville's wording. It may well terminate the pages we have consecrated to the tragic adventure of the young woman who came from Caen to save the Republic and die on the scaffold of murderers.

*"Antoine-Quentin Fouquier-Tinville, Public Prosecutor at the Extraordinary and Revolutionary Criminal Tribunal, etc.*

Sets forth that on the thirteenth of July of the present month, at seven hours three-quarters in the evening, the Police Commissary of the Théâtre François section, instructed by the public clamour that there was, in the Rue des Cordeliers, a great assemblage of citizens caused by the rumour of murder which had just been committed on the person of Citizen Marat, one of the people's representatives at the Convention, betook himself to the domicile of the said Marat, where there was found a woman accused of having committed the said murder, and after having had the cause of this deputy's death confirmed by a surgeon, the said police commissary put interrogatives to the said woman, who stated she was called Marie-Anne-Charlotte Corday, ci-devant d'Armans, a native of the parish of Saint-Saturnin-des-Lignerets, aged twenty-five years less fifteen days, living on

<sup>1</sup> From the original preserved in the National Archives, Séries W, carton 277, dossier 82, pièce 50.

her income, and residing ordinarily at Caen, and at the present moment in Paris, lodging in the Rue des Vieux-Augustins, Hôtel de la Providence, that this interrogatory being ended the police commissary handed over the said Corday to the administrators of the police department, together with his official report, whereupon the said administrators ordered the said Corday to be conducted to the Abbaye and kept in sight by a gendarme, and that the official report and all the documents should be sent to the tribunal, that in execution of this order and of the decree of the Convention dated the fourteenth of July, the present month, to the effect that the Revolutionary Tribunal will at once issue instructions against the murderer of Marat and her accomplices, all the said documents have been remitted to the Public Prosecutor, yesterday, at nine o'clock at night; in consequence, the said Marie-Anne-Charlotte Corday has to-day undergone an interrogatory before the President of the Tribunal, that several declarations of witnesses have also been received by different judges, that an examination being made by the Public Prosecutor of all the said documents, it results that on Tuesday, ninth July, present month, Marie-Anne-Charlotte Corday left Caen for Paris, where she arrived the following Thursday about noon, and lodged in the Rue des Vieux-Augustins, in the house called the Hôtel de la Providence, that she said she went to bed and did not go out of her apartment till Friday morning, to take a walk, that in the afternoon she did not go out, that she set about writing, that next day, Saturday, in the morning, about seven o'clock, and half-past eight, she went out, visited the Palais de l'Egalité, where she bought the knife of which mention will hereinafter be made, took a carriage in the Place des Victoires in order to be driven to the house of Citizen Marat, where she was unable to gain admittance, that then returning to her room, she made up her mind to write to him by the local post and under a false name to ask an audience of him, that towards half-past seven in the evening of the same day she took a carriage and had herself driven again to Marat's domicile, in order to receive, as she says, the answer to her letter, that fearing to encounter another refusal, she had



armed herself with another letter, which she intended should be handed to Citizen Marat, but of which she did not make use, that some women opened the door to her, but refused to let her get near the Citizen Marat, that the latter having heard the said Corday insist, himself requested she should be introduced near his bath where he then was, that he put to this woman several questions about the deputies at present at Caen, about their names and those of the municipal officers, that the said Corday named them to him, whereupon Marat told her they would quickly be punished for their rebellion. It was then that the said Corday pulled from her bosom the knife she had bought in the morning at the Palais-Royal and immediately struck a blow at Marat with it, which pierced beneath the *clavicle of the right collar-bone*, between the first and second true ribs, and that so deeply that an index-finger could easily penetrate in its whole length across the wounded lung, of which blow this representative of the people died almost on the spot, that in the interrogatories put to the said Corday, she admitted all these facts, adding even that her intention was to kill Marat anywhere she could find him, even in the midst of the Convention; that when she was searched there was found in her bosom the sheath of a knife, which she recognised as that belonging to the knife with which she had committed the murder.

According to what is above set forth, the Public Prosecutor has drawn the present accusation against Marie-Anne-Charlotte Corday, for having wickedly and of premeditated design, being at Caen, formed the project of an attempt upon the national representation, by assassinating Marat, Deputy at the Convention, and for the execution of that infamous project being transported to Paris, and two days after her arrival in that city having herself driven, on two different occasions, to the domicile of the said Citizen Marat, to try and introduce herself near him, that having succeeded the second time, she struck him with a knife she had bought in Paris for the purpose, from which blow that representative of the people died almost on the instant, which is contrary to *article four, section three of the first clause and to article eleven, first section of the second clause of the penal code.*

In consequence the Public Prosecutor requires there should be given him the deed of the present accusation, that it be ordained that in his diligence, and by an usher of the Tribunal, bearing the order to intervene, the said Marie-Anne-Charlotte Corday, actually detained in the house of arrest called L'Abbaye, shall be seized in her body, arrested and transported under good and sure guard from the said house to that of Justice de la Conciergerie du Palais in Paris, where she shall be enrolled on the registers of the latter, as likewise that the said order to intervene shall be notified to the municipality of Paris.

Done in the cabinet of the Public Prosecutor this sixteenth July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three, the second year of the Republic.

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE."





## INDEX

### A

- Albitte, Antoine Louis—  
 Demand for destruction of  
 statues of French King, 294  
 Celebration of anniversary of  
 King's death, 295, 296

### B

- Beauharnais, Alexandre—  
 Arrest and imprisonment, 147  
 His last letter, 148, 149  
 His death, 149  
 Beauharnais, La Pagerie—  
 Her visits to Vadier, 144  
 Vadier's refusals to see her, 144  
 Letter to Vadier, 145  
 Marries Bonaparte, 149  
 Beauregard, 34  
 Beugnot, Comte, 49  
 Bibliographical rarities, 14  
 Boivin—  
 His interrogation, 106  
 His acquittal and release, 106

Brissot, 44, 46

Britteville, Mme. de—

- Family tree, 231  
 Marriage, 232  
 Married life, 232, 233  
 Inherits wealth, 233  
 Widowed, 233

Buzot, 23

### C

- Chabot, François—  
 People's representative in  
 National Convention, 151

Chabot, François—

- Announces his coming marriage  
 to the Jacobins, 152  
 Invitation to attend, 153  
 Imprisonment, 157  
 Death, 158

Chénier, Marie-Joseph—

- La Bouchardie his mistress,  
 306  
 His mother's arrival, 306  
 Antagonism to La Bouchardie,  
 306, 307  
 A disgraceful scene, 307  
 Reinstated, 308  
 Death of his mother, 309  
 From scandal to piety, 309

Cahier—

- His gratitude, 105

Corday, Charlotte—

- Declaration of Evrard, 252  
 Her examination, 253-254  
 Her letters, 254-256  
 Trial, 256  
 Execution, 257

Cortey, 28

### D

Danton—

- His incarceration, 85, 86  
 Light-heartedness, 88  
 Estimate of Robespierre, 90

David, Jacques-Louis—

- A journey, 197  
 Biography, 198-207

Desmoulins, Camille—

- A prisoner, 85

## 338 BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TERROR

Desmoulins, Camille—

Ungovernable rage, 88

Farewell letters to his wife, 90-96

Duchatel, 44

Ducos, 44-49

Ducourneau, 42

Dumas, 29

Duplaix, 30

### E

Evrard, Simonne—

Birth and parentage, 274

Connection with Marat, 275-278

Promise of marriage, 279

Marriage consummated, 280-281

Arrested, 283

Set free, 284

Re-arrested, 284

Interrogated, 285

Poverty, 286

Death, 287

Execution of a dog, 296-298

### F

Fleury—

His life in brief, 97

His story of the Madelonnettes, 97-104

Fonfrède, 44-49

Fouquier-Tinville—

His fall, 71

His accuser, 71

Surrenders himself a prisoner, 72

His genealogy, 73-74

Remarkable petition, 75, 76

Letters to his wife, 77-80

His last night, 81

His execution, 82

### G

Gensonné, 44, 46

Gesvres, Duke de, 83

Guénard, Mme.—

Her account of disposal of Princess Lamballe's head, 60

### H

Hébert, Jacques-René—

His arrest, 299

Characteristics, 300

Conjugal felicities, 302, 303

Execution, 304

### L

Labuzière, 63

Lamballe, Princesse de—

Imprisonment, 56

Her last hours, 57

Execution, 58

Lamorlière, Rosalie, 62

Lapagne, 41

Lavalette, 29

Lisle, Rouget de—

Writes the "Marseillaise," 132

Only success, 132

Obscure end, 133

### M

Marat, Albertine—

Her life and incarceration with her brother's widow, 284-287

Visited by Esquiros, 287

Striking likeness, 288

Her ideas of her brother, 289-291

Her death, 291

Marat, Jean Paul—

His birth, 210

Character, 211

Studies, 211

Ambition, 213

Literary attainments, 214

Publications, 214

Home in Paris, 215

Popularity, 219

Sides with the poor, 220

Excites trust, 221

Beginning of the end, 222

Hunted, 222, 224

Narrow escapes, 225

Surrenders at Conciergerie, 227

Trial, 228

Acquittal, 229

Marat, Jean Paul—  
 Acclaimed by the people, 230  
 An appreciation, 258-269  
 Autobiography, 269-274  
 Marie-Antoinette—  
 Sentenced to death, 62, 63  
 Last hours, 64, 65  
 Last letter, 67-70  
 Marino, 27  
 Mesmer, Dr.—  
 Introduces animal magnetism,  
 122  
 Experiments, 123  
 Montmorency, Count de Laval, 28

P

Pointel, Jacques, 60  
 Pons, Marquis de, 28

R

Riouffe, Honoré, 40  
 Robespierre, Maximilien—  
 Youth, 113  
 Life at Arras, 114  
 Some of his pleadings, 115  
 Apparent contradictory person-  
 ality, 116  
 Success at Bar, 117  
 His death, 129  
 His grave, 130  
 Roche-Dumaine, Marquis de la, 83

S

Séchelles, Hérault de, 85-87  
 Sombreuil, Mlle. de—  
 Legend of glass of blood, 135  
 Same disproved, 140  
 Release from arrest, 142  
 Sombreuil, Marquis de—  
 Brigadier-General of Lille, 135  
 Governor of the Invalides, Paris,  
 136  
 Arrested with his daughter, 136

Sombreuil, Marquis de—  
 Interrogation, 137  
 Release, 139  
 Re-arrest and death, 141  
 Son's death, 141

T

Tallien, Mme.—  
 Arrest, 172  
 Entry into the Petite Force,  
 172, 173  
 Her ancestors, 173  
 Adventures of her father, 174,  
 175  
 Love affairs, 176  
 Marriage, 176  
 Divorce, 178  
 Further intrigues, 179  
 Release from prison, 181  
 Second arrest, 181  
 Marriage to Tallien, 183  
 Second divorce, 193  
 Third marriage, 193  
 Mother and son, 194-196

Tallien—  
 Restlessness, 173  
 Denunciation of Robespierre,  
 182  
 Married life, 191  
 Accompanies Bonaparte to  
 Egypt, 192  
 Return to his wife, 193  
 Contrarieties of historians,  
 180-189

Taschereau—  
 Disproval of Mme. Guénard's  
 assertions, 60-61

Thierry, Dr., 51  
 Touzzel, Mme. de, 57

V

Valazé, 44-49  
 Vaubertrand, M., 99  
 Vergniaud, 44-47



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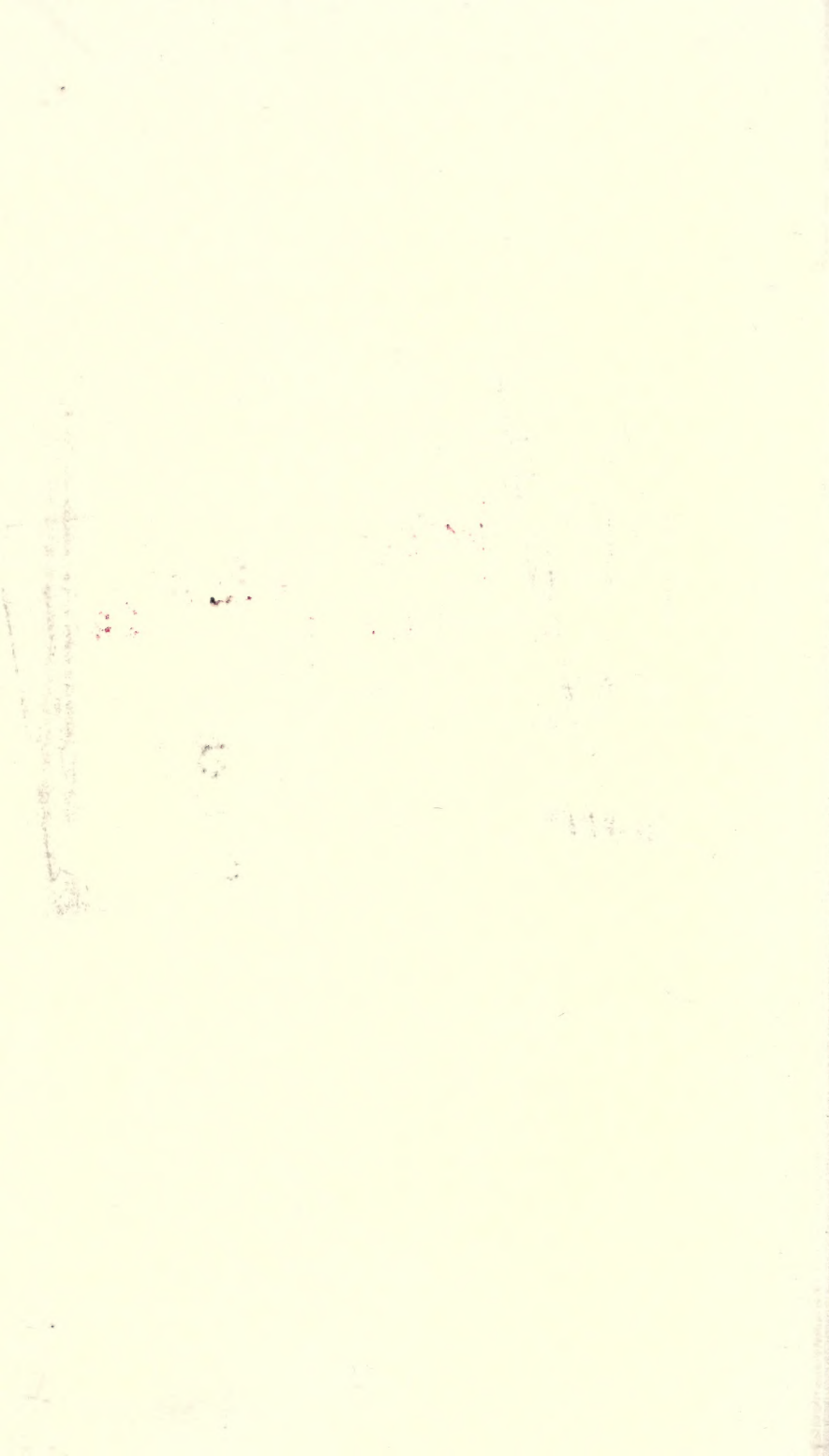
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